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CONTENTS

OMMENTS . . . . . Page 277
OW TO WORK WITH MOSCOW . . . 279
OOKING AHEAD IN SOUTH AFRICA. By S. KATZ 280
HIS ENGLAND 280
LONDON DIARY. By Critic . . . 281
OU'VE HAD IT 281
HE JUSTICES. By C. H. Rolph . . . 282
HE CATHOLICS AND THE SCHOOLS . . 282
PAST VERSUS PRESENT. By Desmond MacCarthy 283
BALLET DESIGN. By Clive Bell . . . 284
THE MOVIES. By William Whitebait . . 284
PLAYS AND PICTURES 284
CORRESPONDENCE 284
From J. Hampden Jackson; O. S. Edwardes; John McNair; Dr. Harry Roberts; David V. Glass; D. M. Matheson; Cahir Healy, M.P.; and others.
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By V. S. Pritchett . Page 287
REVIEWS:
Portrait of an Artist. By Raymond Mortimer 288
The Universities and the Future. By Norman MacKenzie 288
Colourful Pictures? By Brian Howard . 289
Germany. 290
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS 290

WHAT GOVERNMENT FOR ITALY

s the Russians win their resounding victories the Dnieper Bend, while the Allied armies ntinue their steady if slow advance on Rome, e politics of this war acquire a new urgency our thoughts. When the enemy is over- rown, under what sort of governments will the erated peoples find themselves—in Greece, Yugoslavia, and above all in Italy? What is ne there to-day is a model we have to study. reveals the mind of Downing Street and the hite House, if not of the Kremlin. It also aces for us one pattern which the behaviour of e lesser Powers of the Axis may follow. What ppened in Italy may be repeated next year in ungary, Bulgaria and Rumania. It is even ssible that the German army, as doom over- kes it, may discover, late in the day, a Badoglio o will try to "work its passage home." The bject forces itself on our attention this week cause the Duke of Addis Ababa has talked at me length to a correspondent of the London *imes*, while Count Sforza has spoken his mind ore briefly but very plainly to its namesake of ew York.

The case of Marshal Badoglio is peculiar. He rives his authority solely from the King and om the fact that the Allies have recognised m as the head of a co-belligerent State. We e not sure that his Ministry deserves that me: it functions only through generals and official of the Court. Two of these are war- iminals whom the Yugoslavs wish to try for eir brutalities against Slovenes and Croats: they are guilty of charges which rest largely the evidence of their own proclamations they d but follow the example of their chief, for the arshal himself would have to stand in the ck if the jurisdiction of the Allies' tribunal ent back to his Ethiopian campaign. The set of these generals is that they possess the nfidence of what is left of the Italian forces. n land these may be negligible: but they were le to secure the surrender to the Allies of the eet, which includes some well-built ships. ur armies profit also by the goodwill of the ilian population, but this they already had in cily at a time when Badoglio was still declaring s loyalty to his German allies. The recognition the Marshal was a military arrangement which can be justified on the ground that it eased the task of our soldiers in the Italian campaign, while it assured to our sailors the undisputed command of the Mediterranean. It gave us, in short, the fruits of the Casablanca policy of "unconditional surrender."

Of course there is much to be said for the decision to place the weight of the unpopular act of surrender on a man of the old regime and his King. The new men who will lead the Italy of to-morrow ought not to bear this burden, as the Weimar Republic had to do in 1918. The long-range terms, political and economic, with which Badoglio was presented are kept secret. Did he in fact ever sign them? Or is this humiliation reserved for his more Liberal successors?

We have tried to state as fairly as we can the case for this arrangement: a soldier can defend it, as some soldiers defended the recognition of Admiral Darlan. The political disadvantages are as obvious as they are grave. Under this man and this king the braver elements of the Italian nation, who alone deserve our trust and our respect, cannot be enlisted. Count Sforza, though he gives his support even to Badoglio in the campaign to expel the Germans, will not join his Government. He is surrounded, as this veteran liberal puts it, by "evil counsellors," in other words, "the Court circle." Sforza spoke with pride of the men who have made their way south through many dangers, in the hope of entering an army of volunteers. But he told us that their only loyalty is to Italy: they will not take an oath to serve this king. Leaders of the six united parties of resistance have now assembled in Naples with Sforza himself, and the revered philosopher, Croce, among them. They enjoy, however, no recognition from the Allied authorities, and their utterances are subject to censorship.

Worse still, with Amgot's approval Marshal Badoglio is everywhere buttressing the old order with the old props. It is no doubt true that the names and symbols of the former Fascist organisations are banished. But the men whom the Duce used to hold down the masses are finding employment with a minimum of delay under Amgot. A British soldier writing in last Sunday's *Observer* told at first hand how two members of the O.V.R.A.—the Fascist secret police which corresponds to the Gestapo—were arrested one day, only to walk out of prison twenty-four hours later as qualified Amgot officials in the very town "which they had bossed for the Fascists." He tells us that our troops are "worried" by such happenings. We can imagine the dejection of the peasants and workers who witness them.

At present Badoglio's writ runs only in Apulia; over the rest of "liberated" Italy, the *de facto* administration is temporarily that of General Lord Rennell. It is almost inconceivable that Anglo-American administrative personnel can be found in sufficient numbers to cope with an extension of direct Amgot government in step with the northward progress of our armies. Will Badoglio, then, be allowed gradually to add one liberated province after another to his domain? That would be a travesty of liberation. Cession of authority by Amgot should only be to a new Government more truly representing the mass of the Italian people. But will the United Nations help, or allow, such a Government to emerge?

Badoglio has once more repeated his promise to resign when the fighting is over. Free elections will follow. The procedure by which elections are "made" in Latin countries by the administrative machine ranks among the fine arts. It is not so much this we fear as the use in the critical period of the overwhelming means of pressure and inducement which London and Washington possess. Food and coal, credits and raw materials, they can give or withhold according as they like or dislike the colour of the Italian Government that emerges. The peace terms can be stiffened against a Government of the Left and relaxed to favour a Government of the Right. Mr. Churchill, who eulogised Fascism a few years ago as warmly as ever Mr. Chamberlain did, may be bent on using the power of "traditional England" to preserve traditional Europe. For our own part we fear nothing worse than a momentary success for such a policy. Europe has endured too much to settle down again into the old ruts. The kings are as hopelessly discredited as the dictators. But we would wish to spare the peoples the distress and ourselves the discredit of an unnecessary struggle.

The New Viceroy

Lord Wavell has begun his difficult term of office very well. First, he dispensed with all the elaborate and costly ceremonies which usually greet a new Viceroy on his arrival. The day for golden umbrellas is over, if there ever was such a day. Our own belief has always been that a Viceroy who lived, if not exactly as an ascetic, yet with the thought of Indian poverty ever present to his mind, could win the love and respect of Indians. Pomp never did that. Then, in his first speech, Lord Wavell talked with startling frankness about the incredible slums we have allowed to pollute the chief cities of India. Has any previous Viceroy displayed either as much honesty as this or as much concern for the conditions under which Indians live? Thirdly, the new Viceroy flew instantly to Calcutta, and, better still, toured the worst of the stricken districts in the forgotten interior.

There is, meantime, no abatement of the famine, but rather a steady increase in the misery and the mortality. There are English witnesses to see the crowds of landless peasants, who stagger, all but naked skeletons, into Calcutta, only to die on its pavements. But there is no one to tell us what is going on in the villages. While Indians blame the Central Government because it is British, and Mr. Amery very meanly casts all the responsibility on the Bengal Ministry, because it is Indian, we are disposed to look rather higher up. Shipping is scarce, but for this purpose shipping ought at any cost to have been found. Very gradually most of the right measures have at last been adopted: ships are sailing: rationing is being applied: something is being done to enforce maximum prices and penalise hoarding. But the main job of fighting inflation is only just now being tackled. We have urged for many months that men with English experience gained under Lord Woolton and at the Treasury should be seconded to Delhi, with perhaps some brilliant administrator like Sir Arthur Salter in charge of the whole problem with full powers.

But that is not enough. We doubt if this problem can be solved without the active collaboration of Indian opinion. When Hindus choose to use the caste organisation to deal with anti-social persons, it is irresistible. Nothing less, it may be, could defeat the hoarders in the villages. Congress, if it were functioning, could supply both the leadership required for such a service of moral police and also in relief work in the remoter regions—a thing it has often done after floods and earthquakes. Lord Wavell is a brave man. Will he dare to release Gandhi and his colleagues? We believe that Gandhi would put famine relief before politics if he were released to co-operate in this emergency. Civil disobedience (which has failed anyhow) would be formally abandoned.

Our readers will be glad to hear that the Society of Friends, which has its own workers in Calcutta, has opened a relief fund. Contributions should be addressed to the Bengal Famine Relief Account, Friends Ambulance Unit, 20 Gordon Sq., W.C.1.

Red Army's Triumph

On the Eastern Front Russian audacity has achieved results pregnant with possibilities of decisive victory. Stalin and his general staff have played for big stakes; they realised that, if von Manstein were given time to consolidate most of the line of the Dnieper, containing the few bridgeheads won by the pursuing Russian advance guards, winter might find the Southern Group of German armies formidably entrenched behind the river, on whose defensive strength Germany had been encouraged to repose high hopes. Even at great risk, the enemy had to be dislodged without pause from the Dnieper bend, and his divisions set moving once more in a general retreat over open country. Generals Janvier and Fevrier might then turn retreat into rout. So bold tactics were adopted; from the Kremenchug bridgehead an armoured force was launched southwards, *i.e.*, behind the 1st Panzer Army holding the curve of the Dnieper between Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhe. The attack, on a 20-mile front, succeeded; the dangers of an enemy counter-offensive against its western flank were somehow overcome; and as the Russian tanks drove towards Krivoi Rog, while other columns pressed westwards from Zaporozhe across the twice-demolished dam, and north-west from the ruins of Melitopol, the Red Army's grand strategical objective was attained. Fighting desperately, but decisively worsted, von Manstein's armies began the evacuation of southern Russia—a retreat which is bound, at best, to involve crippling losses of equipment, and which may end, if the Russians break through at Kiev, in catastrophe.

How Many Fronts?

Historians, with fuller access than is now permitted to the operational facts, will have to decide whether the war in Europe could have been concluded in 1943 if Anglo-American effort on land had been as unstinted as Russia's. General Alexander tells the press that seven German divisions are causing disappointing delays in the Allies' "slogging" progress—admittedly over most difficult country—towards Rome. None the less, he argues, the indirect military aid given by Anglo-American strategy to Russia is not to be minimised: some 40 German divisions are "pinned" in Italy and the Balkans—to which must be added, say, 40, or so, in the West. The weakness, however, in this encouraging calculation is that, with only about 10 per cent. of these enemy forces actively engaged, the degree of "pinning," from the Russian standpoint, is debatable: formations can be sent to the Eastern Front and replaced by tired divisions. True, Northern Italy has to be held down by a "security" garrison; and in the Balkans the Yugoslav and Greek Armies of Liberation are increasingly aggressive against German lines of communication. But their efforts have not yet been supplemented by Allied landings. Could more of Rommel's forces in Northern Italy be engaged by greater use of the command of the sea which General Eisenhower enjoys? Could the obvious risk of a German recapture of the initiative in Italy—a terrain which the enemy might well prefer as a "Second Front"—be averted by more venturesome action in the West? Men and arms are obviously available to implement Mr. Churchill's promise of "heavy blows before the leaves fall." The bottle-neck—pressure of war-cargoes on sea-transport, aggravated by Far Eastern demands and by the need to provide food for liberated Italy—has still presumably to be overcome.

Mr. Churchill Dots the I's

Mr. Churchill has now told the Scottish Unionist Conference that "it is our duty to ensure that we are fully prepared for the transition from war to peace." He went on to say that "His Majesty's Government are making every preparation," and then expressed his gladness that his own party was also getting ready for the tasks of reconstruction. These remarks, following on the Prime Minister's declaration a week before, give food for thought. Who are the "we" whose duty it is to be fully prepared? The Government or the Conservative Party? How can the Government be "making every preparation," if all controversial issues are to be ruled out, as Mr. Churchill said they were—except of course on the assumption that preparations to reconstruct the world according to the prescriptions of the Conservative Party are to be regarded by Civil Servants as non-controversial? Why is Mr. Churchill pleased that his own party is getting busy about reconstruction, though he knows that this must mean raising highly controversial issues before the war is won? The Prime Minister's latest utterance confirms the conclusion which we drew from his House of Commons speech. He seems to have given up all idea of an agreed post-war programme framed by the Coalition, and is instructing the Civil Service to propose only such plans as will suit the Conservative Party, at the head of which he presumably hopes to remain in office. It is to be hoped that both the Labour Ministers and the Labour Party as a whole are carefully ponderi these developments. They, like the rest of u should now be able to see pretty plainly wh Mr. Churchill stands, and where they must sta if they continue to accept his leadership, n merely in the war, but in plans for peace.

The Mayors' Request

Lord Astor and an influential group of Mayo representing severely blitzed cities and tow have made an appeal to the Government f immediate legislation both to stop speculati in urban land and to afford some secure bas for the replanning and rebuilding of the plac which they represent. Apparently despairi (as who does not by now?) of any comprehensi legislation such as Lord Reith allowed us to ho for two years ago, they confine their plea to t least possible amount of law-making that w enable them to start making plans that they c hope to carry into effect. They want a bill dealin with two points only—the compulsory purcha on the Uthwatt basis (i.e. at not more than pr war prices) by public bodies of land needed f public use and welfare, and the acceleration o the procedure for entering into possession. Thi of course, is not the Uthwatt Report, or a considerable part of it. It is little, if anythin more than the Government have stood pledge to for the past two years. But the present activ ties of the land speculators plainly show that the no longer regard these pledges as holding good. A Lord Astor and his colleagues point out, "infla tion of land values either in bombed districts o in areas near by seems to have begun," an "some property owners will not even negotiat with local authorities when the latter lack com pulsory powers to buy." "Land speculators," they add, "apparently doubt the Cabinet' intention to give us the square deal promised b Lord Reith when Minister of Works and Plan ning." No wonder!

London's Lebensraum

Now that the first blaze of public interest i the L.C.C. Plan has subsided, the real battle fo it begins. Quite apart from questions of financ and technique, there is considerable opposition to some of the main planning principles upo which it is based. Lord Latham rightly dre attention to this in a recent speech. Th proposal to rehouse one and a-half millio people in garden cities and small satellite town runs counter to the central conception of th plan. Professor Abercrombie, and those asso ciated with him in its preparation, have decide in favour of sub-centralisation. This mean reliance upon the rebuilding and rehousin of the population from within the present bound aries of London, and where it is possible, withi the old neighbourhood units. The plan seek to preserve and to foster the neighbourhood ide so that reconstruction can be carried out wit the least disturbance to traditional ties an associations. Though it is true that some score of thousands must be moved from London, overcrowding is to be abolished, and a reasonabl amount of open space provided, the enforce migration of the large numbers now suggeste would undermine the main purpose of the plan.

The Paper Pool

Mr. Lyttelton has now told the House o Commons that he has decided to give more pape to periodicals and is considering an increase fo books. Mushroom publishers are now allowe to use any paper they can find in the hand of a printer. We do not see why the publishers, any more than butchers and othe purveyors of rationed materials should be allowe to start business without a permit; nor does th stuff most of them produce help to justify the existence. Meanwhile, half the titles in th Everyman Edition, for instance, are unobtainabl The moment any more paper becomes available the most useful thing Mr. Lyttelton could d would be not to increase the general ratio available to publishers, but to grant, say, 4,00 tons a year instead of 1,000 to the Pool provide for essential books. The Moberley Committe

lots this paper very carefully, and such a grant ould go far to provide a solution eminently isfactory not only to most publishers but all us who read.

Parliament: Too Old and Too Long?

Wednesday, noon

On Tuesday there were no fewer than three ebates, conducted with some vigour and liveli-ss, on electoral matters: (1) Acland opposed *e Woolwich Writ*. He has made this demon-ration before, but on this occasion had the new d good argument that Parliament was about to ss a Bill modernising the Register: why ouldn't Woolwich wait just a few weeks and ve a really representative poll? Attlee replied, mewhat feebly, for the Government; and the ouse acquiesced in the continued disfranchise-ent of the ardent youth of Woolwich. (2) The ll referred to—*The Parliament (Elections and eetings) Bill*. Once it is passed, by-elections ill be contested on an up-to-date register, with civilian residence qualification of only two onths; Service personnel and seamen will be lly registered (and, when overseas, entitled to te by proxy); it will even be possible to hold General Election during the war, "if," said orrison, "the House could not live with the overnment or if the Government could not live ith the House." Neither Darby nor Joan owed much disposition to kick the other rtner out of bed. The Home Office's Mr. Peake splayed charm, but said *er*, and even *er-er-er*, o often.

(3) *The Prolongation of Parliament Bill*: nother year of life (or of, said one cynic, "sus-ended animation"). G. R. Strauss and Beverley xter supported the Bill with qualifications or luctance, Baxter professing strong feeling in vour of a General Election; several from the her side of the barricade felt more strongly ill about it, and opposed the Bill. Acland is a more effective speaker in the country than in the House: his fanatic vehemence and angular, doom-laden manner make the House uneasy. The Tories guffawed, growled, and barracked him in their usual way. There was little excuse for the sheer rudeness of Quintin Hogg: during Acland's speech he interrupted, spluttered, and sniggered like a bouncing, bubbling fifth-former; later he said that Acland's "hatred for the Conservative Party" reminded him of "the dislike of the lunatic for something which is really sane." Hogg, who is ambitious, must learn to control his temper. Another exhibition of courtesy and logic in the gentleman's party was provided by Magnay, who said that all Common Wealth candidates "are well beaten and have lost their deposits."

Sir R. Acland: I want to correct the Hon. Member on one simple question of fact. We have never lost a deposit.

Mr. Magnay: Then you should have done. After all the money you have spent and the lies you have told, you should have done far better than you have.

Earlier in the day, at question time, Members were indignant that the reports of the recent Parliamentary mission to Newfoundland are not to be published. The Prime Minister thought it "very unseemly" that Hugh Molson should refer to the Minister without Portfolio as "a stooge"; Members hoped that he would not himself be turning mealy-mouthed in his old age. Oliver Stanley, who is personally popular, got a cheer on his return from Africa; among other matters, he announced the formation of a Banana Leaf-Spot Control Board in Jamaica. Rosita Forbes was alleged to have made disparaging remarks about the Soviet Union in a lecture to airmen. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works refused to straighten Richard I's sword (bent in a blitz) until after the war.

PONTIFEX MINOR

HOW TO WORK WITH MOSCOW

MR. EDEN and Mr. Hull have listened to the reat guns thundering Soviet victories in Moscow. heir conversations with Molotov are said to ve gone well—which means, we take it, first at Mr. Molotov has said his say about the cond front and Mr. Hull finished his usual peech about free trade. After that it must ean that Britain and America have agreed not o dispute the Soviet's claim to the Baltic States nd the Finnish bases, and that an effort is to be ade not to quarrel about the delicate questions f the Polish frontiers and the future of central nd south-eastern Europe.

One good purpose has been served by these iscussions. The welcome given to Mr. Hull nd Mr. Eden and the attitude of the Moscow ress, which acknowledges British and American d to Russia, must have convinced the repre-ntatives of Western democracy that the Soviet nion genuinely desires to work in harmony ith them after the war. On the Russian side mething positive has been done to remove spicion. Certainly the diplomacy of Britain nd America has ceased to underrate or cold-oulder the Soviet Union.

With the German armies in full retreat and ith no large-scale western offensive as yet on e Continent there can be no serious dispute out Russia's future influence in eastern and ntral Europe. That is to state the matter udely in terms of power politics. But an reement which meant no more than a recog-tion of Soviet military strength and an under-anding that neither side will interfere where has not the power to do so effectively, would a poor guarantee of the future; it would cidentally leave out altogether all the questions the rights of small peoples which are still an portant part of the world's problem. An reement not to quarrel might be no more than division of the world into spheres of influence, recognition, for instance, that the U.S.S.R. ould do as it willed in Finland, while Britain dominated Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean and a growing American imperialism was appeased by new bases in Africa and Asia.

Such a situation could scarcely be of long duration, and it is an important sign of the times that the Soviet press at the moment is stressing the need of a much more serious and permanent type of settlement. *War and the Working Class*, the new organ, which now best expresses the phases of Moscow's attitude to foreign affairs, has just published a remarkable article which deserved much fuller attention than it received in the British press. Its argument runs as follows. Germany is being defeated; will the common people of the world be betrayed as they were last time? The League failed because the old diplomacy continued behind the scenes. America went into isolation, the U.S.S.R. was boycotted, the other Powers, which had shown themselves incapable of unity, attempted in the last phase when Germany had again become powerful, "to buy off the aggressor by giving him freedom of action in Central and Eastern Europe, merely directing him towards the U.S.S.R."

The lesson which is drawn is that no security is possible without unity among the Great Powers. Can this be achieved? As long as "the contradictions of present-day structure" (which means "capitalism") last, "it is Utopian to feel that there is any absolute guarantee of freedom from war." But "casting aside fatalism," a great effort must be made "to remove the danger of war to the maximum degree." That means, as responsible opinion in the democracies agrees, post-war collaboration between the U.S.S.R., U.S.A., Britain and China. The notion, entertained by some irresponsible people, that Britain and America can jointly police the world without Russia and China, is as unrealistic as the suggestion that world peace could be maintained by excluding the United States or Britain. If agreement can in fact be achieved in fighting Germany—lend-lease to Russia and Soviet participation in the strategy of the Mediterranean and the present delegation to Moscow are cited as examples—then it should also be possible to maintain unity after the immediate task of defeating Germany has been accomplished.

We take this to be a very deliberate statement of Soviet policy. Recent threats of retiring into isolation after the war are not repeated; the Soviet Union intends that this time the effort to work together shall succeed and rejects the theoretical argument that capitalist and Socialist nations must quarrel. This, after all, is the logical outcome of Stalin's policy of "Socialism in one country."

Moscow, no doubt, has very much in mind the period of "relief and rehabilitation" after the war. Here is a field in which everyone agrees collaboration is essential. Perhaps here we may find the beginning of a solution to the problem of making the unity of the Great Powers something more than a temporary necessity.

On November 9th the first Conference of U.N.R.R.A. (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) meets in the United States. What post-war issues are involved? Looked at from this practical angle of Relief and Rehabilitation, the general principles about what to do with Germany, where frontiers are to run and so forth, appear almost academic. At the end of the war a vast area from the Rhine to the Volga will be hungry and chaotic, millions will be without houses, the services will be broken down, food, transport and security against plague will be the main preoccupations. If we behave in accordance with the ideologies of the past, American capital will be used for relief and relief will be used as a political weapon. On the other side Russia, fearing that capitalism will again establish itself (in Hungary, Yugoslavia and Rumania, for instance), might strive to occupy key districts and develop there satellites of the Soviet Union. The problems before U.N.R.R.A. really include all the issues of the post-war world.

There is then one hopeful approach. During the first Five Year Plan Russia needed technicians, and relied largely on skilled advice from the United States. Russians respect, not the political or economic systems of the United States, but its technical capacity. Similarly, it will be long before the United States business world is reconciled to the lesson of the Soviet Union. The acceptance of economic inequalities, a greater tolerance of the Orthodox Church and renewed emphasis on family life and on the virtues of patriotism—these are signs that the Soviet Union has passed its revolutionary stage. They do not affect in the slightest the main achievement of the Russian Revolution. In Russia no man may exploit another man's labour; production is based on a plan of social need—whether armaments to-day or an improved standard of living to-morrow—while the notion of producing for private profit is regarded as morally and economically indefensible.

Here is a great gulf, but American business must accept to-day the efficiency of the Soviet system even if they detest the implications of accepting it. America now has learnt to respect the Soviet technician. In this mutual interest in the use of technical knowledge in order that common men may lead a fuller life, there is hope for the future. The technician is not interested in ideologies, though he often becomes a bitter opponent of the capitalist system because in these days capitalism, once the great liberator of energy, constantly frustrates and wastes the technical capacity of the world. Henry Wallace shows that he understands how an enlightened Western capitalism can work with Soviet Communism when he asks for a "T.V.A. for the Danube Valley." He and Mr. Molotov discovered the true line of advance when they discussed during their meeting in America the great highway which they hoped to see America and Russia jointly build after the war from Alaska to Moscow. In the disinterested use of the technical resources of our age for the benefit of the common man lies the key to the problem of post-war unity.

LOOKING AHEAD IN SOUTH AFRICA

GENERAL SMUTS and his Government are now in an unassailable position in South Africa, and will no doubt remain so for the duration of the war. What his election victory has tended to obscure is the perhaps startling fact that the results of that election demonstrated a considerable achievement, and, in a sense, a victory for Dr. Malan as well. The Nationalist leader never believed that he had even a remote chance of securing a majority on the anti-war platform to which he was, nevertheless, irrevocably committed. Malan's eyes were fixed on the fight he intends waging when the war is over. To him the election was an eliminating round in the post-war struggle. He emerged from that round considerably strengthened. General Smuts performed for him the truly vital service of crushing and eliminating completely every one of the rival Nationalist leaders and groups who had fought him so bitterly and whom all his own stratagems had failed to undermine. What was more, in spite of his record in the war, in spite of the utter frustration of all his neutrality plans, and in an election held at a time when even many ardent Nationalists must have had their emotions stirred by South Africa's share in Allied victories, Dr. Malan emerged not crushed and defeated, but leader of a party of respectable dimensions in Parliament—with 43 seats instead of his previous 41—with one-third of the total votes of the electorate and with a straight fight in prospect against the Government and all that it stood for. This is a portent of which it would be folly to lose sight.

Smuts' majority is overwhelmingly valid for the war period, and the country's effort and contribution in the war gain considerably from the clearing of the air. But the post-war prospect is quite a different one. Even if Smuts' tremendous popularity remains undiminished, a period of reconstruction, depending on constructive policies, is governed by other factors than those operating in what the majority of South Africans, too, regard as a struggle against barbarism. In that period the party conflict will be dominated by the twin facts that while on all major issues Malan can count on a homogeneous, united Opposition there is no such unanimity among the followers of the Government; and that it is on just some of those issues that the Government, if its policy is to be at all imaginative, will want and will be compelled to legislate. The war-issue will rightly be kept alive against Malan for as long as possible; but in the day-to-day struggle on vital questions it will gradually be pushed into the background.

The other great issue on which the Government would be united is the Afrikander-British racial controversy. But for a long time now Malan, who knows as well as Hertzog did that the Afrikanders have secured all they originally set out to fight for, has used the anti-British plank only for tactical manœuvring. Moreover, he has, no doubt, learned from the experience of the past five years that too much insistence on the claims of "Afrikander versus British" rights is liable to give birth only to such movements as in the past nearly succeeded in destroying his own brand of Nationalist party. He is far too wily to look for more trouble in that direction. Nor is he likely to obstruct any Government measures for the improvement of the lot of the white worker. On the contrary, he will play the role of their vehement protector, always going one better in regard for their interests. In his main battle against the Government he will concentrate on those other issues on which he knows he can count for support within the United Party; having the advantage that the Government will undoubtedly take the initiative in raising them.

How far Smuts will go on the road of liberalism it is difficulty to say. Hints and signs from the Union during the past two years indicate that now when, for the first time in twenty years, he can look forward to complete Governmental peacetime power, he is giving full play to the wide imaginative sweep of which he is so eminently capable in order to re-orientate South African internal affairs on progressive and liberal lines. He is even credited with the intention (and he has hinted as much in recent statements) of introducing far-reaching changes in the Union's immigration policy, of encouraging and facilitating a large-scale entry of Europeans. This means a complete reversal of the policy of the past thirteen years, which has been progressively harsher and more restrictive, dominated, even when he was out of office, by Malan.

Malan's 1930 Quota Bill secured the support not only of the whole Nationalist Government but of the then aggressive and extremely powerful Smuts Opposition. In the years that followed, years of continuous strife between Malan and the Government, Malan's outpourings ever found the Government willing to appease by introducing more restrictions. Behind this almost complete unanimity is the fact that in the United Party there is a good deal of coldness and hostility to Jews—who were the majority of would-be immigrants and against whom, directly or indirectly, these measures were always in the first place directed; while there are others in the United Party who have genuinely believed that keeping Jews out would prevent really violent anti-semitism. They did not realise that Malan was interested in keeping out not only Jews but all immigrants who were likely to vote against him at elections.

The result has been not only an appeasement of anti-semites, but the obscuring of the vital importance to South Africa of a substantial increase in population. A reversal of immigration policy is something for which public opinion, including the mass of Smuts' own party and supporters, must be well educated. And while his recent utterances, and discussions and resolutions favouring a flow of immigration at last month's Congress of South African Labour, have already, no doubt, begun the process of that education, it would be extremely over-optimistic to foretell a majority for any radical pro-immigration measure in the near future.

The same kind of difficulty would operate in regard to the native question. There are signs that Smuts is anxious to make serious forward steps towards its solution. In his post-election message he pointed out that a united South Africa depended for its success on "justifying our consciences in our relations between black and white." He has since more specifically proclaimed the principle of employment for everybody, white, coloured and black, on decent standards of living, and he has made clear that he recognises the native contribution to South African development. It can hardly be believed that Smuts would be content with nibbling at the problem, whose ramifications are so wide and deep that it cannot be solved at one stroke or overnight, and whose solution consequently demands comprehensive planning for years of action. No "justification of conscience" can be claimed unless a powerful attack is made on the widespread malnutrition and insanitary housing conditions under which vast numbers of natives suffer, and unless there is a radical revision of the whole of current policy on native wage-rates and of the hopelessly inadequate provision for education.

These are elementary needs. Yet here, too, in spite of ameliorations, mainly during these years of war, the record of Government in South Africa has at best been one of toleration towards the "negrophiles" who have cried out for a solution of the problem. What is most important is that except by private agencies there has, until recently, been very little education of public opinion, either on the real magnitude of the problem or the vital importance of its solution as much on grounds of national well-being as of humanity. Any proposals which looked like a serious change would arouse the inevitable storm from Malan and the agricultural interests of which his party is mainly representative; and he would have every reason to expect support from substantial numbers of Smuts' own followers, among them the mining interests which, while more liberal in their attitude towards the native workers, have an equally vested interest in the *status quo*. He could reasonably count on support even from the Labour Party, whose attitude, broadly speaking, of indifference and worse to native interests is one of the anomalies of its existence. Here, again, Smuts could capitalise on his own popularity to wring some concessions from the vested interests. But anything far-reaching and imaginative, anything which might really provide a grand finale to his political career, would, without adequate preparation, be a hazardous operation.

These two illustrations are indicative of likely developments in the Union. They indicate not that a liberalisation of South African policies is impossible; but that progressive thought in South Africa has yet a hard struggle in front of it, a struggle to which the result of the recent election bears little relation. The election gives it only a few initial advantages, including consolidation of General Smuts' popularity and prestige; but the game is far from won. If Smuts were ten years younger, and had a decade or more in which to re-educate public opinion and lay both the foundations and the superstructure of progressive policies, and were prepared, as leader of a Liberal party, to exploit his prestige in disregard of the prejudices and vested interests to which he has in the past had to bow, the struggle would be considerably shortened. But it is unreasonable to expect a long innings after the war from him. Despite his un-septuagenarian vigour, he is known to look forward to retirement some time during his present term of office and as soon after the war as possible. It is likely, therefore, that the main struggle will have to be waged without Smuts, and without his prestige and present unifying influence.

At the moment the most likely candidate for the succession to leadership in the Government is J. H. Hofmeyr, an unusual figure in politics. He has not secured any great hold on the mass of the people by whom he is regarded as too much of a "high brow." If his chances for the future Premiership seem brightest at the moment it is probably because he can add to his many other qualities a brilliant administrative record; and on the other hand, because it has been largely impossible for any of Smuts' other lieutenants to impress themselves on the public as doing much more than "peeping out from under the huge legs" of the colossus like Smuts. Hofmeyr will certainly not be able to count on the united support of the United Party some of whom regard him with the same eyes as America's anti-New Dealers regard Henry A. Wallace, and are probably even now looking round for a "safer" candidate. SAMUEL KATZ

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to I. S. B.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Worst disaster of all. Scotland beaten 8—0 at Manchester.—Headline in *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.*

Scores of eighteen-year-olds and under write to us despairingly about their busts. Let's get them straight, immediately; they're fashionable now. So regard yours as an asset and treat it to the finest brassieres you know.—*Sunday Pictorial.*

Our excellent coinage is good for trade, especially the printers and stationers, who make and sell ready reckoners, a thing unknown in countries on the decimal system.—Letter in the *Daily Sketch.*

Lost, Tuesday forenoon, between Cluny Terrace and Morningside Road, via Nile Grove, W.A.A.F. skirt.—Advt. in *Edinburgh Evening News.*

Hollywood can afford to pay an executive £237,441 a year—16 times the President's salary and roughly 100 times Gen. Eisenhower's. But, of course, his responsibilities are great.—Film notes in *Daily Telegraph.*

A LONDON DIARY

NEVER knew a time when the political prospect s more uncertain. Some say that in an election r. Churchill will win hands down, anyway: d that Labour is so weakly led and so shockingly ndicapped by Transport House that there will t be more than fifty to seventy Labour M.P.s the next Parliament with say thirty Common- ealthers, a dozen I.L.P'ers and half a dozen mmunists. Others, whose calculations in rms of votes only differ very slightly from this timate, think that the Left swing of the country cluding returning soldiers and airmen) will push bour into office, in spite of its inadequacy. hich might suit the Tories better; nothing so od as to allow your opponents to fail publicly. d this time there would be no recovery from epetition of 1924 and 1931. On either calcula- n the moral is, for goodness sake, unite the pro- essive forces before it is too late.

* * *

A letter reached me a few days ago from a end in the country which might have been ted twenty years back, but wasn't. It told er again the tale so familiar then of official llousness (is there a kinder explanation?) towards r-disabled men. Once again they are reduced to lling their handiwork from door to door to in a scanty living. The man who knocked at friend's door was selling various articles de of leather, supplied to him and his friends the Red Cross, at an extravagantly high price. e man who made them had no legs. The man o sold them had been blown by a shell out of a p in Libya, shell-shocked and blinded for a ne, though his sight is now returning. He is a rried man with a little girl to keep. He had in pocket a letter from the Ministry of Pensions ich informed him that it could not attend to his e for at least three months and asked him not write again in the interval, as this would only d to useless correspondence at a time when it s severely understaffed. And so it all starts in—even the pitiful, humiliating canvassing m door to door in search of help and sympathy. e man left a card offering to do repairs to niture and clocks. But the Authorities, if was correctly informed, will not let this group invalided men open a shop. The sooner there an explosion of creative anger in Parliament e better.

* * *

Some of us are asking urgently why the Bill ting up tribunals to fix rents for furnished oms, which Mr. Tom Johnston has introduced Scotland, cannot be extended to England? It happened that a refugee friend of mine, a tinguished chemist, had been telling me, a day two before the debate on this Bill, that such bunals existed in Germany during the last r and for several years after it. They worked ll, in his opinion, and the procedure was both id and inexpensive. His own case had set n thinking about this gap in our institutions. meone offered twice the rent he had paid for nished rooms in 1942, and he was turned out thout even a chance of bargaining. His earch work, which may be of high value to defence, was interrupted for ten days, while hunted for another room. Thousands have ffered in this way, not to mention other petty annies, and most of them are on war work. ey cannot escape by taking unfurnished rooms, cause furniture, if procurable at all, costs a som. As he justly points out, this constant sing of the level of rents causes not only vate misery but public loss. It manifestly ds towards inflation. Experts tell me that islation will have to deal with some obvious cks of evasion. Extra charges can be levied some trifling service or nominally for light. e way out of that difficulty should be to leave commonsense of the tribunals free scope, d not to tie them up in pedantic definitions.

* * *

always find planning exhibitions exciting. e neat, clean models of building schemes, the proposals for national parks, improvement of public services and all the rest of the things most of us want, often give a thrilling idea of the Britain it is technically possible for us to have one day. That is why the L.C.C. Plan for London was so good. It showed how order and beauty could be made out of chaos and squalor. And I got the same impression from the exhibition at the Institution of Civil Engineers. This time it wasn't the town-planners or the sociologists, but the technicians who were insisting on the need to tackle the confusion that is the legacy of more than a century of unplanned industrial development. Their approval is fresh and interesting. They are the people who have to put general plans into effect, and I can see no possible answer to the pithy arguments that accompany their exhibits. Looked at from the public, which is the only defensible, point of view, their proposals for introducing a rational scheme for fuel, water, drainage and sewerage services are splendid. Nor need one be an engineer to appreciate the advantage for the housewife of the domestic furnishings and fitments that are here shown to be technically possible. I don't believe either the ordinary woman-in-the-home or the technician and engineer on whom our society depends will long put up with their present frustration.

* * *

The debate on electoral reform was coloured by several personal rows. Jack Beattie's powerful indictment of the Tory Cabinet in Ulster was really confirmed by the bitter personal replies of two Conservative members from Northern Ireland. It is not true that the arguments against a wartime election in England apply equally in Ulster. And even in wartime the Stormont Government cannot prevent widespread unemployment. Beattie went so far as to say that the loyalty of Ulster Tories was conditional on financial support from this country. Of course his suggestion that the life of the Northern Ireland Parliament should not be prolonged was steamrollered.

* * *

The first of the Fabian Society's annual series of public lectures this year is to be given by Herbert Morrison, on October 30th in the Conway Hall. Subject: *The State and Industry*. This is a happy choice. Mr. Morrison was the first public figure to see that the crucial issue of post-war politics will be the *constitution* of industry. That it will be "controlled," is a foregone conclusion, but whether it is controlled for the benefit of the public or in the interests of propertied persons is still undecided.

* * *

The war has sent industry out into the countryside. With it went thousands of women workers unused to its habits or discipline. *War Factory* (Gollancz, 4*s*. 6*d*.) is the first coherent and serious study of this strange new community life. One of the most useful jobs Mass Observation has done. Note that the factory under observation is in an isolated country district; the problems of billeting, hours spent in travelling to and from work, and the boredom would all be quite different near a town of shops and cinemas. First point about boredom is the excessive period of work at the bench. I remember an article published in this journal as early as 1941 which described the way in which workers find ways of passing or wasting the time if the hours are too long. It stands to reason. If you know you will be finished by five o'clock you hurry with the job, looking forward to the evening with the boy friend at the dance or film. If you know you have got to stay till 8.0 and that you will be too tired and too late for enjoyment, you chatter and slack off or contrive to spend time with your friends in the cloak room. You probably do less work between 3 and 8 than you would have done between 3 and 5. All this business of the optimum hours of work was explored in the last war, and I have never understood why we had to repeat this particular mistake. However, *War Factory* is concerned less with hours of labour than with the political apathy, irresponsibility, and aimlessness of passive leisure which are characteristic of this "female labour force." These women are not interested in their work nor in the war. They remain private units with only personal interests, though they work in team conditions. The management, in this case at least, is not at fault. The works and labour managers come out of this inquiry well; opposition to improvements came in this case, and I suppose in many others, rather from the inertia of unorganised workers than from a reactionary or hostile administration.

* * *

The newspapers (including the "This England" column of this journal) quoted the other day a remark attributed to Dr. T. H. Sanderson-Wells of the Food Education Society to the effect that a perfectly well-balanced chemical meal, containing all the necessary vitamins, had proved fatal to a number of rats which were fed on it. This is a good example of a press reporter's misunderstanding. The point of the remark was that the food was chemically perfect, but contained no vitamins—which is why the rats died. In the same way, Dr. Boulenger, our favourite Zoo expert, has explained how chemists made apparently perfect sea water in which all the fish died because the water was without its natural vital elements.

* * *

"Surely it can't be L.-G. himself that's got married?" they asked on Saturday night when I looked in at the village pub. I assured them it was no rumour. L.-G. himself, aged eighty. And I told them about Miss Stevenson and how she had been his secretary in the last war and ever since, and how jolly it was to see them together last time I was at Churt. Everyone was pleased; everyone sent his anonymous congratulations. "Eighty?" they repeated. Well, why not? But what a man! What a man! CRITIC

YOU'VE HAD IT

(*This poem reaches us from a soldier in the Middle East.*)

BELISARIUS swatted flies,
Cambyses was not desert wise,
Gordon's men boarded their fleets
Up and down the Berka streets,
The thousand climbed Calabrian slopes
And Hannibal knew all the ropes.
So tell me do you think that you
Are really doing something new?

The desert grave and the drowned sailor,
The ships beaching on the shore,
The trampled field and the corn unsown,
We have seen all this before.

Sands drifting on Leptis Magna,
The cheap wine and the soldier's whore—
Burning Dido or Liz with a sailor,
We have seen all this before.

Black men humping on Tripoli mole,
The murdered Jew and the homeless Pole,
Soldiers searching their shirts for fleas
In peasant huts on the Dodecanese,
Sicily taken and Carthage sacked,
Cities stormed and defence lines cracked,
The armchair critic and the fighting few—
You don't believe all this is new?

The regiment lost by people at home
And men in offices winning the war
And the flow of a soldier's blood on the road
We have seen all this before.

The men demobbed and the good jobs gone,
And the soldiers shunned as a dismal bore,
The history written with facts all wrong,
We have seen all this before.

ENVOI

Prince! You may have got the pox in Spain,
And marched to Rome and back again,
But you're not the first with a grumbler's liver,
And you won't be the last man sold down the river.

DESERT RAT

THE JUSTICES

WHENEVER the Judges of the High Court have used especially withering terms in reversing a decision of local Justices, they have precipitated a spate of articles and letters-to-the-Editor in almost every section of the press, always with a quality of particular violence and recrimination when "flogging" has been on the agenda. The Hereford case just qualified for discussion by the floggers and anti-floggers because there had been a sentence of four strokes with the birch. When these doughty irreconcilables (always narrowly watching each other) came into the fray, the case quickly reached a crescendo which almost drowned the thunder of war. With such a strong lead from the King's Bench you could be comfortably certain that the local Justices had made a shocking mess of the case, whether or not you understood what was wrong about their conduct of it; the hunt was up, and there was room for all.

Further discussion of the Hereford case itself is for the moment precluded by the issue of writs against the erring Justices and the announcement of a forthcoming judicial inquiry; but there are general principles involved which can be re-examined with profit. Juvenile Courts are not "star-chambers"; orders committing children to the care of a "fit person" are not *lettres de cachet;* juvenile offenders are not tried *in camera;* the birch is not a "cat-o'-nine-tails"; and the assumptions to the contrary which have bedevilled so many recent discussions tend to swamp what informed criticism there is.

A Juvenile Court must sit either in a different room from that used for ordinary cases, or on different days from those on which ordinary trials take place; but section 47 (2) of the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933, which makes this requirement, certainly does not say that no one may be admitted to hear the cases. On the contrary, it specifies clearly who may be present—members and officers of the Court, parties in the case and their legal representatives, witnesses, newspaper and news agency representatives, and "such other persons as the Court may specially authorise to be present" (e.g. probation officers and known social workers). So much for the complaint that "secrecy" is responsible for the abuses said to be prevalent in Juvenile Courts as distinct from other Courts (a complaint which has been nourishing itself on an ambiguous remark of Mr. Justice Hallett's in the Hereford case). The people excluded are, as things work out, the queer, seedy men-about-town who assemble in the public galleries of the Courts to see their brothers in adversity go to prison. The restriction on press reports is that the name, address and school of the offender may not be published; and, in view of the photographs of the Hereford boy which have already appeared in the press it is interesting to note that "no picture shall be published in any newspaper as being or including a picture of any child or young person concerned in any such proceedings." By way of disposing of the cat-o'-nine-tails fiction (but by no means suggesting that a birching is a pleasing experience or, for that matter, is any less futile as a deterrent than the cat itself), it should be mentioned that the "birch rod" used is a bundle of fifteen or twenty birch twigs, from 2 feet 6 inches to 3 feet long, bound tightly together for about half their length to make a handle about as thick as that of a cricket bat. The maximum number of strokes permitted is six (1933 Act, section 60 and Schedule III), and they must be administered by a constable (who is quite often a jailer at the Court) in the presence of a police inspector and (if they want to be present) the child's parents or guardians. It would be a chastening exercise for the pro-floggers to compare notes with a constable who has had the job of birching a child, and a life's work to find one who liked doing it. It is the floggers-by-proxy who are the most vociferous; the real flagellators would proclaim their aberration only under psycho-analysis.

As to the custom of committing a young offender to the care of a local education authority, section 76 of the Act says that a local authority is to be regarded as a "fit person" (there can be many kinds of "fit persons"—relatives, foster mothers, probation officers, etc.) to whose care children may be committed if they are "in need of care or protection." This last term carries a long and careful definition (section 61), the most frequently invoked clause of which contemplates that the child has no parent or guardian, or one not exercising (or unfit to exercise) care and guardianship, and is consequently "falling into bad associations or exposed to moral danger, or beyond control." The phrase as a whole, and the idea of housing the child with a fit person, shows how inept (as a rule) are the criticisms alleging savagery and callousness. An education authority receiving the custody of a child in these circumstances must provide for his education, board him out, and (like any other "fit person" selected for the job) retain control of him until he is eighteen (section 75) or until the order is revoked by a Juvenile Court—which may be done "on the application of *any person*" (section 86 (6)). If he is eleven when the order is made, he is thus looked after (not "sentenced") for seven years.

What of the cry now to be heard (according to press reports) among the people of Hereford: "We want stipendiary magistrates"? It is time the people of most cities and boroughs were reminded that for the past 80 years they have been in a position to get a stipendiary magistrate for the asking—provided they would have been prepared to pay him enough and their populations exceeded 25,000. In 1863 Parliament passed the Stipendiary Magistrates Act, acknowledging in its preamble that owing to the volume and complexity of the work done in the Justices' Courts there was "reason to believe that such cities and places would secure the services of stipendiary magistrates . . . if provision were made by authority of Parliament for the appointment of such magistrates." The Act therefore provides that if a two-thirds majority of the town or borough council want a stipendiary appointed, they can make a by-law fixing the salary they propose to pay him and send it to the Home Secretary for approval. On the Home Secretary's recommendation the King can then appoint a barrister of not less than five years' standing to be "Police Magistrate" for the city or town. The case of incorporated boroughs was dealt with twenty years later, when the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, provided in section 161 for a similar method of petition to the Home Office from borough councils in the places to which that famous Act applied, and for the appointment as stipendiary of a barrister of seven years' standing.

But what has happened? Less than a score of towns in England and Wales have troubled to ask for a stipendiary magistrate. Places as large as Sheffield and the County Borough of Croydon still do without one. The local elector probably does not know of this remedy within his grasp, but it is the business of Town Clerks' offices to know. The paradox that immediately suggests itself is that the members of the local council so often double the part of local Justices, a system which many thoughtful people regard as entirely pernicious—the Mayor is *ex officio* a Justice, and the councillors are recommended for appointment as J.P.s to keep him company. Thus a decision by the local council that they must have a stipendiary magistrate would be an act of corporate self-abnegation rare in the history of local government. But all these J.P.s have to offer themselves periodically for re-election (not as magistrates, as in America, but as councillors), and if the ratepayers were sufficiently enlightened and determined they could then elect non-Justices with a mandate to procure a stipendiary magistrate for the town. Cumbersome, and highly academic, but it could be done; Hereford and other towns who don't like their J.P.s should put it on the agenda of their Ratepayers' Associations.

It should not be forgotten that many J.P.s are legal men (some are High Court Judges); that Justices' Clerks are normally men of ma Court experience whose mistakes in directi and advice are remarkably few by compari with the countless *gaffes* which they preve that a thorough schooling in the law, thou useful if not indispensable in a magistrate, no means entails an education in the humaniti and that even the lawyers are pretty often wro —a study of the Law Reports will shatter illusion that the stipendiaries make no mistak Probably "local option" is no better for justi than it is for beer or cinemas, so that if t appointment of stipendiaries everywhere wou really do all that is claimed for it when the fierce controversies convulse the press, t solution is for Parliament to enact that stipen iaries shall at once be imposed on all hithe lay jurisdictions, as is done (without hurt parochial pride) in the case of County Co Judges and Coroners.

C. H. ROLPH

THE CATHOLICS AND THE SCHOOLS

How far is it true that the Roman Catholics a the real obstacle to a satisfactory settlement of t problem of the non-provided schools, and a standing out unreasonably against a settleme which offers them every prospect of advantage No one denies that the settlement proposed in t White Paper offers the Catholics a great de The White Paper offers the bodies responsible f the non-provided schools a choice between two a ternatives. Under Alternative A the entire financ responsibility passes to the Local Authority, a the managers preserve only the right to be satisfi as to the appointment of "reserved teachers", w may give denominational instruction for not mo than two periods a week to children whose parent desire it, all other religious instruction to be giv in accordance with an "agreed syllabus." Und Alternative B the managers are to continue r sponsible for half the cost of improvements a external repairs, the Local Authority meeting other costs, and the Managers retaining the present freedom unimpaired in respect denominational teaching and appointment teachers. By accepting the second of the alternatives (the first alternative being admitted unacceptable), the Catholics will escape a la part of the cost of maintenance which falls up them under the existing system; and they w also be able to take advantage of the revival of t provision for new building grants to get up 75 per cent. of the cost of new Catholic Sen Schools borne upon public funds. The existi Catholic Secondary Schools will also be able, placing themselves under the local Educati Authorities (and also, perhaps, under revised co ditions of Direct Grant from the Board of Educ tion) to secure greatly increased public financ aid; and there are also proposals which will ma it easier for Catholic children to be transport at the public expense to non-provided schools their parents' choice, instead of attending t school nearest at hand.

About what, then, are Catholics grumblin Are they merely asking for more, meaning to take much as they can get when the time comes; have they a real grievance? Their first argume appears to be simply that they are too poor profit by the terms that are offered them, becau they need all their money for new churches a have none to spare for schools, even if the St foots the greater part of the Bill. It is, of cour true enough that a large part of the English Cathol community is poor, and that the majority of t Catholic primary schools are in poor district and it is true that this largely explains th existing shortcomings in the matter of standar overcrowding, and criminal records amo juveniles. But, if the Catholics insist on ma taining their own schools, they must surely expe to be called upon to meet an appreciable part the cost, and can hardly expect the public to p the lot—especially if paying the lot is to mea big extension of Catholic denominational edu tion in the new secondary field.

The Catholics' second argument is that, even the White Paper gives the Local Education Authorities greatly extended powers to aid the Catholic schools, there may be areas in which the L.E.A.'s will not, in practice, give them a square deal. This applies mainly in the field of post-primary education. Most of the existing Catholic elementary schools are "all-age" schools up to 15, and are due for reorganisation so as to transfer the elder children to new Senior or Secondary Schools. The Catholics want their own senior children to go to Catholic schools; but they doubt whether most L.E.A.'s will in practice be prepared to use the permissive power to make building grants in such a way as to enable the Catholics to build enough new senior or secondary schools to provide for the children of Catholic parents. They are afraid of losing, in short, their control over their children at 11, instead of at 15, or whatever the normal leaving-age may be. They want to be assured of as good a place in the new secondary system as the White Paper actually gives them in the primary field up to 11.

Thirdly, the Catholics feel a sense of grievance because their schools are being put on a par with the Church of England schools, whereas they maintain that in fact there is a very great difference. The Catholics say they want to educate the children of Catholic parents, and not of others, whereas the Church of England, so many of its schools being in "single-school" areas, is in fact staking out a claim to be allowed to go on giving denominational instruction to other people's children at the public expense. They argue that, the specifically Church of England problem of the "single-school" areas could be considered and solved apart, it would become practicable to arrange a much more satisfactory settlement of the rest of the problem—preferably on the lines of the "Scottish Settlement." Under this plan the denominational schools are transferred entirely to the Local Authorities, which become wholly responsible for finance, curriculum, and appointment of teachers, subject to approval of the teachers, in respect of their religious beliefs, by representatives of the denominations concerned. This plan, which appears to work smoothly in Scotland, was rejected in the White Paper mainly on the ground that it could not be applied in the "single-school" areas, without creating a strong sense of grievance among non-Anglican parents, and also on the ground that denominational instruction has always been allowed in *provided* schools in Scotland, and has been practicable because of the greater religious unity of the country.

The first of these objections is clearly valid against any proposal to apply the Scottish plan to the bulk of the Church schools in England. But would the second argument remain valid if the problem of the "single-school" areas could be settled separately? A great many Catholics think that it would not, and would accordingly like to see the Church schools in "single-school" areas taken over completely by the State, and the Scottish plan adopted there, so as to leave freedom to Catholics or Anglicans or any other group with a big enough following to have its own denominational schools for its own children on the Scottish model.

This would mean, of course, a profound alteration in the basic structure of public education in England and Wales. It might result in taking down the ban on denominational instruction in the ordinary provided schools, and thus, instead of ending the old religious controversies, give them new life in altered form. The Scottish system has worked because the parents are, by an overwhelming majority, Presbyterians. Episcopalian and Catholic schools are few in number. Might not the permission to each denomination to have its own schools wholly at the public expense create in England a situation most dangerous for the future of education?

We think it would. There are going to be difficulties enough over the assimilation of the existing secondary schools at present outside the State system; for many of these are denominational up to a point. The problem has not been acute so far, because it is only now that the Headmasters' Conference seems to have become aware that religion lies at the root of its educational efforts, and to be setting about a "revival" of school religion. There may be trouble over this, wherever in schools catering for boys and girls of all denominations an attempt is made to give religious instruction a pronounced denominational twist. It would be most unpleasant to have added to this danger a new system of State payments that would provide strong inducements to start large numbers of denominational new secondary (= senior) and even perhaps primary schools.

The Scottish settlement will not work here. Alternatively, the Catholics suggest that they shall be supplied with interest-free loans to cover their part of the costs of building new schools. But how, in such a case, does an interest-free loan differ from a gift? There would be something to be said for ensuring that they shall be able to borrow on gilt-edged terms; but it is hardly practicable to go further than that. As a further alternative, the Catholics have suggested that their liability shall be limited to a maximum per school-place, the State finding the balance. But any such system would work out very differently in different areas, owing to the inevitably wide variations in cost.

In our view, the only real Catholic grievances, even assuming the necessity of providing for a continuance in some form of denominational schools, are, first, that they cannot be sure of fair and equal treatment from every Local Education Authority, and secondly that their claims are being prejudiced by being deliberately mixed up with the quite different, and essentially more unreasonable, claims of the Church of England in the "single-school" areas. They are surely right in contending that there is a vital difference between a desire to secure denominational education for children of Catholic, or Anglican, parentage, and a desire to force children of non-Anglican parentage to receive their education in Anglican schools. This difference can be recognised even by those who are critical, as we are, of denominational education of every sort and kind. And it can also be agreed that there may be some parts of the country where the Local Education Authority, armed with purely permissive powers, may refuse to the Catholics treatment which is readily being conceded to them elsewhere.

This second point can be easily safeguarded by providing for an appeal from the L.E.A.'s decision, with power to enforce compliance on the L.E.A. where the Catholics can put up a valid case. The first point can be disposed of only by taking over the schools in the "single-school" areas, not incompletely as is contemplated in the White Paper, but altogether. The Catholic and the remaining Anglican claims will then stand on a par, and, as far as the primary schools are concerned, will be reduced to manageable proportions.

The problems raised by the extension of secondary education to all will remain difficult, even if that of the primary schools is got out of the way. Do we want the new system of universal secondary education from 11 *plus* to grow up largely on denominational lines, or do we want most of the new Modern Schools, as well as the Technical and Grammar Schools, to be built and owned by the public? If we want the latter, we must not make it too easy for the Catholics, or for anyone else, to build new denominational secondary schools at the public expense. It will be much easier to insist on high standards if the great majority of these schools are publicly owned; and high standards will of themselves do something to mitigate denominational zeal. If we must make concessions to the denominations, let us make them fairly between sect and sect, but let us not make them too generous, or we shall have our new secondary system torn fatally asunder by religious fanaticism.

PAST VERSUS PRESENT

THERE *is* an interesting, well-acted play to be seen at the Whitehall Theatre. It is also the first production of a new venture (The Contemporary Theatre, Ltd.), with intelligence and enthusiasm behind it, and therefore deserving support from playgoers who have these qualities. It is almost perfectly cast with the exception of the part of Christopher Lisle, who is not boyish and disarming enough. The title *The Dark River*, refers to that stream of touchingly amusing or preciously painful memories and associations which, if we bathe in it perpetually, may sever us from interest in the present or the future. The playwright's contention is that this "river" must be crossed and left behind, if we are to live to any purpose or continue to get much from life. It is an attractive important psychological theme, and it is worked out skilfully and dramatically between the characters Mr. Rodney Ackland has assembled. If anything the theme is too ubiquitous, for when the spectator has twigged it, he may get a little tired of seeing it cropping up everywhere. All the characters in varying degrees illustrate the unfortunate consequences of living in the past, but the *dramatic* conflict between past and present takes place in the heart and mind of a charming woman. Catherine Lisle, having reluctantly divorced an irresponsible husband, with whom she had lived lightly through six happy-go-lucky years, is henceforth torn between her backward-gazing protective tenderness for that boyish man and a new passion for an alarmingly serious suitor.

When the story begins (the action takes place in 1937), Catherine has just recovered from a grave illness and she is still unhappy. Hoping to fill the emptiness of her days with memories of happier ones, she has come down to spend the summer with her old schoolmistress, Mrs. Merriman, for whom the clock stopped when her son was killed in the last war. Here, in this familiar house by the Thames, where everything recalls her girlhood (especially the familiar phrases and mannerisms of scatter-brained peremptory "old Merry"), Catherine hopes to lay the haunting memories of her happy-wretched marriage by writing some account of it. She has brought down with her, not only her manuscript but a woman friend, also divorced. Gwen is a specimen of the "bright young people" whom she presumably saw much of while married to Chris. (Miss Nadine March, together with Miss Richmond, who is admirable in the part of the ex-schoolmistress, deftly supplied the comedy in this sad penetrating play.) Gwen's view of Catherine's plan for spending the summer, which she has only fallen in with because she was broke, is: "I think you're *mad*, coming down here and brooding about Chris when you could have stayed in town and gone after that new man—Allan something or other." The upshot of the dialogue at this point is that Catherine writes to Chris. And then, unexpectedly, Allan Crocker comes down. (He is well played by Mr. Michael Golden.) Catherine and he discover they are in love, and both are happy. But she posts that letter to Chris!

This arrested my sceptical attention. Only as the play went on did I understand that it was a flash of true insight into this charming creature, and the keystone of the theme. By the first refreshing wave of present love Catherine had been reminded more vividly than ever of the man through whom such feelings had come to her in the past. Did it make her yearn again for his arms? No; but she cannot bear to think of Chris as being parched as she had been—before her new love kissed her. At Allan's touch her past has become again too real to be broken with, too beautiful ever to be forgotten. But imagine the effect of this on Allan!—a man of action with purposes and plans who, if truth were told, values the present chiefly because it can change the future! There is an admirable scene in which they have it out together. Though Catherine still not fully understands how exasperating it must be to a lover to hear constantly about her marriage (such reminiscences to her were proofs of intimacy) she surrenders out of fear of losing him; packs up and goes back with him to London, promising never to see Chris or Gwen again. But before she leaves she gives her crestfallen ex-husband her manuscript which commemorates their life together. After all, it most properly belongs to him; also it is the one sign she still can make that,

in spite of the emotional muddles of their lives and her present happiness, she loves the past they shared together. All Chris says, while she smoothes his hair and straightens his tie as she used to do in old days, is "I wish you hadn't written to me." But Allan's misgivings about Catherine prove well founded; she cannot cross the river. She has all the qualities likely to make a hot-hearted, contentious, public-spirited man happy except that one, so dear to Meredith and Trollope in their heroines—resolution. Her "Yea" is never quite "yea" nor her "Nay" quite final. A chance meeting, and finally the "autobiography," bring Kate again into contact with Chris. On her side it was an impulse of pity. She found, after living with Allan, that Chris now actually bored her, and that has enabled her to have a completely good conscience about sometimes seeing him again. But to Allan, when on the eve of the journey to Paris together which is to lead to their marriage he discovers what has been going on, when he comes to fetch her, and meets Chris who had arrived to discuss the publication of the manuscript, that is final. It is a moving scene. Mark the dumb despair in Catherine's attitude while Allan slowly takes her things from their suitcase and puts them on the sofa. Throughout Miss Peggy Ashcroft has acted superbly well. The Catherine she embodies with candour in her heart and fibs on her lips, with her yielding kindness, gentle spontaneity of passion and fidelity of feeling, is adorable. She sees that Chris after all is to be her fate, and she makes a humble little attempt to repeat the lessons learnt from Allan. "Chris, listen . . . let's forget what we've ever been to each other in the past. It can't come back, not with me, anyway—I'm someone different. We're on the verge of terrible things. . . . Let's try to face whatever's coming and not *pretend* any more. . . . Perhaps in a new sort of way we'll be happy together again. Couldn't we try? Let's start from a new beginning." I am not quite sure whether the author wanted us to believe that the "life is real, life is earnest" tack will work for them: I did not.

Mr. Rodney Ackland is a dramatist with an eye for the usual-unusual in human nature and creates his play out of what in life has interested him: a good sign. He has a quick response (always useful to a playwright) to people's surface peculiarities; witness in this play his drawing of Mrs. Merryland and Gwen. (By the way, the former is so extravagantly spinsterish that it should have been an adopted nephew, not a son, of hers who had been killed in the last war.)

The Dark River presents us in its wider implications with the doctrine that those who cling to the past, or about whom the past clings, either inevitably crumble into a second childhood like the old father of Mrs. Merryman, or fossilise into oddities like that lady herself, or, like Catherine, pass by some fountain of living water, or, like the whole group of them taken together with their post-last-war sentiments, become through lack of foresight responsible for political or social disasters. With this doctrine I naturally am unable to agree. I have come myself to that period of life where many most interesting conversations begin with, "Don't you remember . . .?" But I can defend my position as well. For men and women of action to be haunted by the past is certainly apt to be a disability, but it is no drawback to contemplative natures. Why should the Present be a more instructive or fruitful matter for contemplation than the Past? The ever-changing, than the unchangeable, which, moreover, every moment the former is itself in the process of becoming? Poets and thinkers have never found it so, and I doubt if Mr. Rodney Ackland has himself at moments of creation.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

BALLET DESIGN

THE exhibition of ballet designs, organised by C.E.M.A., and now showing at the National Gallery, is disappointing. It is not bad; but it might have been better. All that was needed to make it thoroughly agreeable was that the organisers should have remembered the uses of photography. As Mr. Haskell points out in his Foreword, "music, drama, dancing and painting are equal partners in ballet." One partner, acting alone, cannot be expected to do the work of four; and, in fact, the hand-coloured collotypes by Picasso are, I think, the only things in the show which, taken as they hang, independent and isolated, produce a completely satisfying effect. Most of the drawings are mere indications for the benefit of the costumier or scene-painter: had they been supported by photographs of the mimes wearing the clothes and dancing before the appropriate background, had a few finished dresses been exhibited—some of them perhaps worn by lay-figures—there can be little doubt that the significance of the drawings would have become more intelligible and that life would have been given to this conglomeration of dry bones and pickled embryo. As it is, one is at a loss to imagine what these scraps, some of them agreeably reminiscent and evocative for those who have seen and enjoyed the ballets, will mean to those who have not.

Further, the camera might have served to give us a taste of those legendary entertainments which come to mind whenever the word "ballet" is pronounced. "Ballet": we think—that is, if it is of design we are thinking—of Picasso, Derain, Matisse, Rouault, Braque, Utrillo, Pruna, Marie Laurencin and Miró. Surely it would have been possible to show reproductions—coloured reproductions preferably—of drawings for *La Boutique, Pulcinella, Parade, Rossignol, Les Biches* and the rest? To this it cannot be objected that reproductions have been rigorously excluded; for, after all, collotype is a process of reproduction. Failing anything better than a fleeting reference (the *Tricorne* designs) to the masterpieces of modern ballet: decoration and dressing, it might have been wise modestly to limit the collection to British designs or Sadler's Wells even. Native artists would have had nothing to be ashamed of: while the title "Sadler's Wells Designs" would have made it possible to include the drawings by Sophie Fedorovitch, which are amongst the most charming in the gallery. Cecil Beaton's drawings, hanging naked, may not amount to much; but the effect of his ballet *Apparitions*, which could have been suggested by one or two photographs, was highly pleasing, and as much may be said for *The Quest* by John Piper. It is to the credit of Paul Nash that, though his drawings hang beside those of Picasso, the sureness of his taste preserves them from total disparagement.

CLIVE BELL

THE MOVIES

"Holy Matrimony," at the Tivoli
"The Lamp Still Burns," at the Leicester Square
"The Volunteer," at the Odeon

How important, and how rare, good stories are on the screen can be judged by anyone who compares *Holy Matrimony* (Arnold Bennett's *Buried Alive*) with almost any film shown in the last six months. It has a comic situation—the famous painter who sees his valet buried in Westminster Abbey, and gains a new lease of life—and from this innumerable lesser situations, of an equally enjoyable order, arise. There's no need for exquisite acting or the well-timed direction that will spin a charm out of nothing, because Arnold Bennett's story and dialogue are there. Hollywood, as a matter of fact, has made an excellent job of it, on its usual starry principles. New film wanted for Monty Woolley—beavers—artists—remember the success of Somerset Maugham's Gauguin—and off we go. Mr. Woolley, of course, has the time of his life. Stalking through the fog in an Edwardian cape, weeping over his own burial service in the Abbey, wielding at intervals a paint-brush whose works it is best not to scrutinise too closely, living on as a gentleman's gentleman, getting married in Putney, being charged with bigamy and painting on the sly—whether as the great Farll or as plain Mr. Leek, it's a part Mr. Woolley can revel in. And the script writer, unobtrusively, has written in some suitable cadenza passages. Unexpectedly and richly farcical, for example, is the trial near the end, when we are beginning to think that the fun will give out; for twenty minutes or so the comedy of swindling art-dealers and outraged patrons and Farll, by the means of two moles, scandalously unmasked is uproarious. Apart from Mr. Woolley, there is Miss Gracie Fields, showing herself for the first time as an actress, and a very competent one, in the part of the domestic lady who makes for bliss in Putney. She reveals a natural dignity and charm which were never allowed to emerge in English films. Even if one doesn't believe in the "greatness" of Farll's painting, his choice of a happy life is unquestionab *Holy Matrimony*—tepid title!—is fun.

The Lamp Still Burns ought to be more interesti and appealing than it is. The background is genu —a nurse's life in a London hospital hemmed in w restrictions; and as long as the camera is b exploring wards, operating theatres, staff halls a board rooms, the film holds its own. But the st — triangular, alas — has the usual sentimen blight, and the mixture of romance and muck-rak is neither authentic nor sensational enough. H far this film is Leslie Howard's one doesn't kn but it falls a good deal short of *The Gentle &* Rosamund John, as the rebellious nurse, is qu appealing.

In *The Volunteer*, a forty-five minute documen made by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, are told quite a lot about the Fleet Air Arm, and information has been scattered round the pers encounters of Ralph Richardson and his dre Fred. This isn't especially compelling as doc mentaries go, but it has an artful casualness warmth from which some of our more unbend realists might learn.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Hansel and Gretel" at the New Theatre

"When past bearing is our grief
God the Lord will send relief."

Thus, to Humperdinck's most radiant music, hungry children comfort one another in the fore it was not to be foreseen, in 1893, how empty ironical the sentiment would sound to the Europe 1943. *Hansel and Gretel* would not perhaps go do very well just now in Brussels or Warsaw or Stal grad; it is blandly and deliciously German, as t adjective used once to be understood. In London all events it still enchants, and the Sadler's We revival, in their latest season at the New Theatre, certain of success. Taken all round, a most enjoya performance, though it is useless to pretend that t drastic scaling down of the orchestral forces does rob the score of its golden Wagnerian glow—rat as though one were to play Chopin on a piano wh lacked a sustaining pedal. Mr. Powell Lloyd's st direction is excellent; his sets, unashamedly in pantomime style, have at any rate the merit of pretentiousness. Heaven defend us from a curt to Act II which should attempt to look like anythi but a Christmas Card; nevertheless the stage pict was in general rather gratuitously hard on the e The last act, with its marzipan cottage straight out Disney, struck the happiest note. Mr. Herb Menges conducted; the best of the singers w John Hargreaves as the Father and Valetta Jacopi the Witch. Miss Jacopi, in an admirable make had the brilliant notion of really singing the p instead of croaking it like the awful old woman *The Magic Flute* who turns into Papagena; she ma in consequence, the best Witch we have seen. Miss Bower was a good, if conventional, Hansel; wh Olive Dyer, who might have been created to p Gretel, appeared to have stepped straight out o Bavarian picture postcard—and almost with enlargement. Yes; Nat Gubbins's "Sympathy Germany Organisation" might do worse than su sidise a tour of this delightful little opera.

Correspondence

SMALL NATIONS

SIR,—In your view "it is meaningless to talk of t independence of these dwarf States, rent with d divisions." That was the Habsburg's view of Ser the Hohenzollerns' view of Belgium, and the Na view of half the States of Europe. Estonia, Latv and Lithuania are dwarf States, though the small is larger than Holland, Belgium, Denmark or Switz land. They had their class divisions, though th were no greater than those in the Western democraci But if it is meaningless to talk of their independen then our cause in this war has no meaning, for we tered on it, as on the last, in defence of internati covenants and in support of weak nations agai unprovoked aggression.

The first Government to recognise the *de j* sovereignty of the Baltic States was the Soviet Gove

ment, in 1920, a recognition which was reiterated from the Kremlin as recently as October, 1939. The only Government which has officially recognised their incorporation in the Soviet Union is, I believe, Hitler's. You say that "they preserved their independence only as long as they could trade on Russo-German rivalry"; but the years between 1922 and 1933 when there was least of that rivalry were precisely the years of the Baltic States' most sovereign and happy existence.

It may be inexpedient and untimely to talk of the independence of the Baltic States, but surely it is not meaningless, unless you hold that the principles for which Britain is ostensibly fighting are meaningless and you are ready to forfeit the confidence of the occupied and neutral nations of Europe and to play up to the suspicions of the sections of American opinion which you most deplore. J. HAMPDEN JACKSON

[We were using the word "independence" in the sense of effectively sovereign. We should deny that even States much bigger and stronger than these can be that under modern conditions. They can defend themselves only by becoming the satellites of a Great Power. Effective autonomy (not independence) would only be possible for them in the federated Europe which has yet to be created.—ED., "*N.S. & N.*"]

INFORMATION ABOUT INDIA

SIR,—"An American" overlooks the fact that our newspapers have only four, six or eight pages daily to cover, in wartime, more tremendous events than they had to deal with when they ran to 28 or 32 pages. Why and how could they be expected to share the interest of the Calcutta *Statesman* in Assam's censorship of private letters, least of all when we take for granted a similar censorship, for the same purpose, in strategically analogous areas of Britain? Otherwise, "An American" courteously taps on the head a nail that some of us have been trying to hammer home for many years—either from India or here on the spot when we return from India.

I would make the same point more bluntly than "An American" permits himself to make it. It is perfectly true that here in Britain, inside and outside Parliament, you have an ignorance about India that is just about proportionate to Parliament's high responsibility in Indian affairs. Or rather, it used to be proportionate. To-day it is more than that, for six of the eleven British-Indian provinces, with over 115,000,000 people, have redeemed themselves by provincial autonomy from Parliament's responsibility for the normal, day-by-day concerns of their "common man." But how many people in Britain, how many fewer in the U.S.A., are aware even of that? For two years after my return from India I watched and heard the House of Commons at work very regularly. I could quote howlers from all sides of the House that would have staggered me if I had known any better *before* I went to India; and I mean howlers of simple fact, not opinion. They sounded like extracts from American books or newspaper articles about India, but of course they had less excuse.

Like most people, I could see what an appalling mess Parliament was making of affairs on its own very doorstep, and I wondered where it got the notion that it was equipped to deal with the interests of 350,000,000 people thousands of miles away. It is refreshing to meet, in your columns, at least one American who knows where many of his country's publicists get *their* sublime assurance about Indian affairs. But they have no responsibility for India. The British Parliament and voter have a great responsibility. Let them for heaven's sake either equip themselves for it or (better still) get rid of it.

O. S. EDWARDES

PETERBOROUGH PORTENT

SIR,—It is a great pity that my friend Frank Horrabin, in his analysis of the Peterborough result, made a gratuitous attack on those who are really his best friends, viz., the I.L.P. It is pleasing to record that his sentiments are not shared by Sam Bennett, the Independent Socialist candidate, who makes the following statement about the "prigs" of the I.L.P.: ". . . The comradeship of those few days of hectic work was amazing to me. It was marvellous to find such devotion to a Cause. I am in wonderful health and spirits for I realise now that we did a real good job of work. . . ."

As Frank Horrabin says, "Peterborough is a railway centre and the railwaymen have always formed Labour's vanguard in the district." We had an excellent candidate in the field, Will Ballantine of the N.U.R., and as soon as we knew that Sam was breaking the truce and standing as an independent Socialist candidate we requested Will to withdraw. He immediately agreed and came from Perth, spending two nights in the train, in order to speak for Sam Bennett, and back, firing his engine, the next day. A glaring example of I.L.P. priggishness!

"The Tories made all the play they could with the I.L.P.'s attitude to the war." Of course they did. You see, Frank, the Tories don't like us. They realise that we are diametrically opposed to them on every issue. I would suggest that this just about proves we are right.

Now, with regard to the "obstinate isolationism" of the I.L.P., this is a view which is often put forward by some of our friends of the Left and is quite erroneous. The point is that our political programme, for which we stood and stand "in isolation," is now the accepted policy of most of the genuine Left:

1. Labour should break the truce with the Tories.
2. Labour has been conscripted, wealth has not.
3. The Third Front in Europe—the Workers' Front, *vide* Mussolini.
4. The National Government's semi-fascist foreign policy.
5. The dominance of the State by Big Business.
6. Only Socialism will bring a real peace.

Our whole approach to capitalism in war and in peace has been justified by events, and it is a strange tragedy that good comrades like Frank Horrabin should reproach us for having preached, very often against bitter hostility, those principles in which they now believe. They'll accept our whole case before this war is ended!

With regard to "having a distaste for Toryism and Viscounts," may I submit that this is not enough. Our Socialism means continuing opposition to any form of capitalism or capitalist parties, either Liberal or Tory. In other words we stand for Independent Labour which Keir Hardie and Bob Smillie preached "in isolation."

The final point is "the state of mind which prevents us from realising the difference between a propaganda fight and one which there is a possibility of winning." Now what does Frank Horrabin mean? Does he mean that we should temper our principles to every wind that blows? That in order to win a Parliamentary contest we should wait till the cock crows thrice? If so, we part company. We are not prepared to betray our Socialism "if there is a possibility of winning." This is the descent to Avernus. To do this would be to lose twice, both the Parliamentary contest and our souls. JOHN MCNAIR,
General Secretary, I.L.P.

BIRTH, POVERTY AND WEALTH

SIR,—I think that Mr. Titmuss is hyper-sensitive. I gave his book a long review, remembering the paper shortage, and a good deal of honest praise as a subtle and capable analyser of official figures; and I referred to the undoubted ability of his editor, who happens to be an old friend of mine. I merely expressed my own feeling that the conclusions at which they had arrived were an old story which many of us had been preaching for years, in times more appropriate than wartime. Take the figures in the second paragraph of my review. I do not think that social or economic disparity is greater to-day between the "Classes" than it was when I wrote five years ago; and I know that it is very much less than it was when I first began to practise medicine. Of course, overcrowding and relative poverty increase mortality, and especially infant mortality rates; they have done so ever since I began to study the subject, and I am not convinced that they are having a greater effect to-day. Contrari-

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JONATHAN CAPE

wise. Not being quite an "innocent," I do not propose to accept Mr. Titmuss' invitation "kindly to tell him where his statistical technique is at fault"; I am not a statistician by profession. I certainly have not analysed "several million" statistics, as Mr. Titmuss, probably quite truly, says that he has. He evidently, however, has neither read nor analysed the statistical records to which he refers in the first paragraph of his protesting letter. I will not take up your space unnecessarily, but will merely refer Mr. Titmuss to page 8 of the Annual Report of Dr. McNalty, the then Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health for the year 1938, published in 1939. He will there find tables reported to the Ministry by the Registrar-General. I would refer him also, to the Summary Report issued by the Ministry of Health for the period 1941/2, published in September 1942 (especially chapter 3 and page 28); and lastly to an official document to which I referred in the final paragraph of my review as not having been yet seen by Mr. Titmuss when he wrote his book; and that is the Summary Report of the Ministry of Health for the year ending March 31st, 1943, published only in September, 1943; whereas Mr. Titmuss' book was sent to the printers in May, 1943.

HARRY ROBERTS

SIR,—I find Dr. Roberts' review of *Birth, Poverty and Wealth* somewhat puzzling. It begins by asserting that the older generation will find it difficult to accept the author's conclusion that social inequalities in mortality have increased in the present century, and ends by accusing Mr. Titmuss and Dr. Newfield of allowing preconceptions and personal presumptions to temper scientific objectivity. In between, the review consists of a medley of quotations from a previous review by Dr. Roberts of a book published by Mr. Titmuss in 1938, and of facts taken from the new "Summary Report to the Ministry of Health," and from other sources, all supporting the theses that:

(*a*) general mortality has declined in the last 30 years, and

(*b*) there is a disparity between the mortality of different groups.

All the information given by Dr. Roberts is very interesting, and no one would deny his theses. But almost none of it has any direct relevance to Mr. Titmuss's thesis, which is simply that, as regards infant mortality, the decline among the individual social classes has been of such an order that the relative position of the poorer classes in 1930/32 was as bad as, or possibly worse than, that in 1911. If Dr. Roberts wishes to disprove this thesis he would obviously have to discuss the validity of the statistics used by Mr. Titmuss, and of the analysis made of them. Failing such a study, his irrelevant comments give no support to his accusation, and would lead the reader to assume that Dr. Roberts' views on the objectivity of *Birth, Poverty and Wealth* have been conditioned more by personal preconceptions than by any adequate understanding of the statistics involved.

DAVID V. GLASS

THIS PAPER BUSINESS

SIR,—A mere private in the British Army welcomes the opportunity of replying to Colonel Ball. What a privilege to be able to talk to him without being on a "charge"!

In desperation the Colonel appeals to the public at large (I wonder if it includes me?) to formulate a scheme whereby the colossal waste of paper may be saved. Not only the War Office, but H.Q.'s are perpetrators of the crime of wasting paper. At one particular H.Q. where I spent a few months the wastage of paper was "criminal." This particular H.Q. prides itself with all the intelligences, but if any intelligence is to be evinced one would require a very powerful microscope, otherwise the tons of paper wasted annually would have stopped years ago. The fault there lies to a very great extent with the sergeant-major who runs the organisation, not as the Army would wish it to be run but as he personally orders it to be run, so that he can defiantly show those who are unfortunate enough to work under him, the power he wields.

Obsolete documents, irrespective of the length of no "operational" value, months and sometimes years old, copied out by a big staff and a sergeant-major, determined that each copy sent is "bulled" to the extreme limit. I have known him to waste a thousand sheets of excellent foolscap paper on a copying machine before, say, 100 sheets were passed by him. This was a daily process and still goes on now. The clerks, mostly young men, A1, fear and tremble when typing or copying. They must "bull" to please the sergeant-major. Paper wastage is occasionally remarked on, but as the sergeant-major does not mind wasting thousands of sheets daily, why should they, "the stooges," worry? Most of the waste paper was subsequently burned—not pulped.

I wonder if Col. Ball religiously reads the innumerable papers with which he is flooded?

PRIVATE

NATIONAL TRUST

SIR,—We have read with interest your correspondent's letter about properties given to the National Trust and their future use.

We should be most interested to see any suggestions which may be made by readers of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, but perhaps it is not sufficiently appreciated that all the historic country houses which have been given to the National Trust with endowment for their future upkeep have so far been given subject to an arrangement by which the family continues, at any rate for the present, to occupy the house subject to public access, at a small charge on certain days.

No immediate problem, therefore, arises, though the Trust does hope that it may have in its hands some properties of this kind which may be available for purposes of social betterment such as your correspondent envisages.

D. M. MATHESON,
Secretary
The National Trust,
7 Buckingham Palace Gardens, S.W.1.

NORTHERN IRELAND

SIR,—I was much interested in Rita Hinden's letter in your issue of October 16th on "Empire Policy" and her criticism of Herbert Morrison's recent speech.

Much nearer home—in Northern Ireland—you have the County Council and other local bodies in Fermanagh so jerrymandered that the minority dominate the majority. The Nationalist population of 30,000 can only elect 7 councillors to the County Council, whilst 24,000 Unionists can elect 18. The former return one member to the Northern Parliament, but the minority can return two.

It will surprise people more to be told that if General Montgomery came to settle down here, and that he were born in the home of his distinguished mother, he must wait seven years before the Northern Government will permit his name to appear upon the Register of Parliamentary Voters. If you happen to have been born in the next field or street, but just across the border in the 26 Counties misnamed Eire, you may have saved the Empire, but the Northern Government will treat you like a foreigner.

If Lady Montgomery decided to come to reside in the next parish in the 6 Counties known as Northern Ireland, she would be in a similar plight. The political ban is as ruthless as the colour one.

Yet Mr. Morrison alleges that "every community in the Empire capable of exercising self-government has had it." Self-government! Truth can be so elastic in the mouth of a clever statesman.

Enniskillen. CAHIR HEALY

SHADES OF COLOUR

SIR,—I witnessed the following scene yesterday at a Chinese restaurant:

Two U.S. negro sergeants enter.

The (Chinese) manager: "No coloured people will be served here."

A sergeant: "But I cannot understand . . ."

Manager: "You cannot eat here."

Negro: "And where are you having your meals?"

P. O. D.

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JOHN MURRAY

Mrs. Belloc Lowndes
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BOOKS IN GENERAL

If literature were to follow the excellent custom of the Catholic Church which adds some new saint to the calendar in every generation, and with more than half an eye on that generation's needs, it is easy to see which character in fiction is ripe for canonisation to-day. Not the tilting figure of Don Quixote; not the innocent Pickwick; certainly not Robinson Crusoe, that too industrious town planner knocking up a new society. If it is the business of the saints to assuage the wishes of the unconscious, to appeal to that part of a man which is unpopular with himself, then to-day we must get away from these energetic, expansive and productive figures. Falstaff the coward, Oblomov the sublime sluggard and absentee, seem to me our natural candidates. Oblomov, above all. In a world of planners he plans himself to sleep. In a world of action he discovers the poetry of procrastination. In a world of passion he discovers the delicacies of reluctance. And since we reject his passivity he bears our desire for it like a martyr. For us he sleeps, for us he lies in bed daydreaming, for us his mind goes back to the Arcadia of childhood, drinking the opiate of memory. For our sakes who live in clean rooms and who jump out of bed when the alarm clock goes, Oblomov lies among his cobwebs and his fleas, his books unread, his ink dry in the bottle, his letters unanswered. While we prosper, he is cheated. And at the end of our racketing day we see his face—the moon-like face of the obese and the slack, and with that wry kink of fret and faint madness which the moon sometimes has on it—we see his face looking upon us with the penetrating, disturbing criticism of the incurable, the mysterious reproach of the man who is in the wrong. Slowly, guiltily, his foot comes out of the bed clothes and dangles furtively above the slipper on the floor and then, with a tremor of modesty before the implications of an act so obscenely decisive, the foot is withdrawn. Who knows what valuable grains of sensibility are lost to the soul when a man is tempted to stand upright?

In all the great mad literature of nineteenth century Russia Goncharov's novel* is, to my mind, the gentlest and most sympathetic in its feeling. Like so many great books, it grew beyond its author's intention. Goncharov was one of the new realists and reformers. He wrote to satirise the sluggishness of the old-fashioned landowner. The industrialisation of Russia was beginning, and he wrote to extol the virtues of the new business man. *Oblomov* is an excellent example of the value of propagandist purpose to a novelist: in a great novelist this will stimulate the talent until it swallows the purpose. Without genius Goncharov might have written a tract. Having genius, he has created one of the sublime comedies of all literature. After we have read this book we do not hate idleness, escapism, daydreaming: we love Oblomov. We have discovered a man, a new man whose existence we had never suspected; a ludicrous Russian nobleman who, somehow, is in ourselves. And, so peculiar is the relation of moral purpose and literature, we are not in the least impressed by Stolz, the busy, cheerful man of affairs, who is held up for our admiration. It is easy and natural to admire *him;* our sense of justice, our humanity and our sense of adventure, demand more delicate and difficult tasks. Oblomov loses Olga, Stolz marries her; but, like Olga, after her years of happy and successful marriage, we have an intuition that something was lost when Oblomov was cast away. As Goncharov wrote—and he spent many years on this book—he began to see beyond the comedy of Oblomov's fate into the value of it. Propaganda does not become art until it has the grace and the courage to welcome the superficial defeat of its purpose.

There is reason to regret—though such regrets are really irrelevant in criticism—that Goncharov did have a purpose, and that he took it seriously enough to create the character of the virtuous Stolz. Stolz is not a failure as a character. Goncharov was an exceptionally gifted observer, and he was incapable of palming off on us a wooden or sentimental idealisation in the manner of our Victorian novelists. He has the kind of closeness to fact which Trollope had. One's criticism of Stolz is simply that he exists at all. The book could get on quite as well, indeed it might have taken a more startling and imaginative turn, without him. I do not say this as pure conjecture. We now know enough about Goncharov to see that he was not a mere pedestrian realist; and Russian critics have pointed out that *Oblomov* is a much more subjective book than it appears to be at first sight. There is more than one hint in the drawing of Oblomov's character. That he should pay for his torpor by being filthy and getting swindled we easily see. What other price is there? Ill-health, of course. But there is something more. A faint furrow comes sometimes between those bland and mooning brows; a perceptible dryness gives, once in a while, an unguarded edge to his voice. Oblomov has the horrors. Under that passivity lies a possible madness, a frantic, abysmal, screaming despair. Now, in fact, Oblomov does not go mad in the book. Once he has retreated from his affair with Olga with all the faultless strategic skill of the neurotic, he slumps to a comfortable, though pilfered, life in the arms of his landlady. He is ill. She mothers him. She recognises in him an innocent. It's a shock to a moral man like Stolz, who believes in self-mastery, self-knowledge, the muscular development of human character; to Stolz Oblomov is like a man who has gone native. But benign to the end, ineffectual, happy and blessed by Fate, Oblomov dies in his sleep, protected from his enemies and wept by the few who love him.

Nothing could be more assuring. "Charm" is a word one has grown to dislike, but it has to be used. There is a transcendent charm, an ineffable prosaic delicacy, in the book. But we can't get away from it: the second part, although benign and moral, is dull. Suppose, for one moment, that Goncharov had not kept up his guard. Suppose that, undirected by moral purpose, he had told much more of the truth. For Goncharov was, of course, a potential Oblomov—the fat man with the plegmatic and malicious tongue, they called him. And Goncharov had the horrors; he knew what they were. His life is one of those tales of mania that shadow literature, as we are said to be shadowed all our lives by our agonies at birth. Goncharov's minutely observant disposition concealed a nature eaten up by malice and jealousy. A slow, vegetating writer who wrote little, he could never forgive Turgenev for his adroitness and his skill and his success. He conceived the notion that Turgenev had stolen one of his plots and some of his characters, and even a humiliating public arbitration on the matter did not cure him. As the years went by and Turgenev's fame grew, Goncharov built up a fantastic dossier of Turgenev's supposed plagiarisms. Jealousy grew, as it will, into persecution mania. That is the drama which is missing: Oblomov's hatred of Stolz. Alternatively Oblomov's hatred of himself. Dostoevsky would have seen that; but, thank heaven, Dostoevsky did not seize the character of Oblomov. He would have made him more Russian Christ.

Looking back on that paragraph, I begin to wonder if I have not strayed into a too strenuous conception of Oblomov's character and have forgotten his humility and its complement: his immense passive conceit. No one can say that Oblomov is a divided man, he is as perfectly integrated as a blancmange. Oblomov's relations with the swindling Zahov, his servant, is like that of wife and husband; and the master rises to feminine heights in the wonderful quarrel which takes place in the early pages. Like some inured husband Zahov watches with resignation the familiar sight of Ilya Ilyitch Oblomov building up an emotional scene:

> "Then why did you talk of moving?" said Oblomov. "Why no man can stand it!"
>
> "I merely thought other people are no worse than us, and if they move we can," Zahov said.
>
> "What? What?" Ilya Ilyitch asked in surprise, rising from his chair. "What did you say?"
>
> Zahov was confused, not knowing what he could have said to cause his master's dramatic gesture and question. He was silent.
>
> "Other people are no worse!" Ilya Ilyitch repeated with horror.
>
> "This is what you have come to! I shall know now that I am the same as 'other people' to you!"
>
> Oblomov bowed to Zahov ironically, looking deeply insulted.
>
> "But Ilya Ilyitch, I've never said you were the same as anyone else . . ."
>
> "Out of my sight!" Oblomov commanded, pointing to the door. "I can't bear to look at you. Ah, 'other people'! Very well!"

The scene goes on. Oblomov calls for kvass, and begins again on an ominously quiet note:

> "Well, how do you feel?" Ilya Ilyitch asked gently. "You aren't happy, are you? Do you repent your transgression?"
>
> "Whatever is this?" Zahov wondered bitterly. "Something heartrending, I expect; one is bound to cry if he goes for one like this. How have I grieved you, Ilya Ilyitch?"
>
> "How?" Oblomov repeated. "Why have you considered what *other people* are? Comparing me to 'other people,'" Oblomov said. "Why, do I rush about or work? Don't I eat enough? Do I look thin and wretched? Do I go short of things? I should hope I have someone to wait on me and do things for me. Thank heaven I've never in my life put on my stockings myself. As though I would tremble! Why should I?"

And so he goes, pulling out all the stops, until the final words of this sublime quarrel, until Zahov is sobbing with contrition which—experience has taught him—is a necessary part of the play:

> "And you," Oblomov went on, not listening to him, "you should be ashamed to say such things! That's the snake I've warmed in my bosom."
>
> "Snake!" Zahov cried, clasping his hands and setting up such a howl that it sounded exactly as though two dozen bumble-bees had flown into the room and started buzzing. "When have I mentioned a snake?" he said amidst his sobs. "I never even dream of the cursed thing."

Both had ceased to understand each other and now no longer understood themselves.

Goncharov had all the comic gifts. He had the art of capping one absurdity with another yet more absurd. He is fantastic in this scene; but in the beautiful chapter which describes Oblomov's childhood and youth, he is also the master of the quieter humour of real record. The talk about the evenings drawing in, in the Oblomov drawing-room, is a perfect fragment of satirical observation. Again his purely descriptive drollery is superb. There is the hour of the siesta when, the family and servants having guzzled in their plump and sunny Arcadia, all are asleep. It is a folk picture, a scene from the *Sleeping Beauty*, a fairy tale—to those scenes Russian humour owes a profound debt:

> The gardener stretched himself out under a bush in the garden beside his mattock, and the coachman was asleep in the stables. Ilya Ilyitch peeped into the servants' hall: everyone was lying down on the benches, on the floor, and in the entry; the children, left to their devices, were crawling about the yard and rummaging in the sand. The dogs retreated into the depths of their kennels, since there was no one to bark at. One could walk straight through the house and not meet anyone; one could steal everything there was about and cart it away unhindered—but there were no thieves in these parts. It was an overwhelming irresistible sleep, a true semblance of death. There was no life anywhere: only sounds of snoring of various pitch and quality came from every corner. Occasionally some sleeper would raise his head, look in senseless surprise about him and turn over or spit without opening his eyes, and munching with his lips or muttering under his breath, drop asleep once more. Another would suddenly without any preliminaries, jump off his couch as though afraid of losing precious moments, seize the jug of kvass, blow the flies that floated in it, causing them to move violently in the hope of improving their position, take a drink, and again fall on the bed as though shot dead.

The undertone of dream and fairy tale runs through the book like the murmur of a stream, so that to call Goncharov a realist, is misleading. Oblomov himself becomes one of those tran-

* *Oblomov*. By Ivan Goncharov. Trans. by Natalie Duddington. *Everyman Library*.

scendent characters which have grown over a long period of writing, which exist on several planes, and which go on growing in the mind after the book is put down. Now he seems to symbolise the soul, now he is the Folly of Idleness, now he is the accuser of success. He is an enormous character.

One other character ought to be mentioned: Olga. She is a direct descendant of Pushkin's Tatiana. In drawing her Goncharov achieved something unusual. Ever observant, he set about describing the birth and growth of a girl's personality; and especially he set out to describe what most novelists—always too much in love with their heroines—omit: the growth of the will. Goncharov showed that the apparently incalculable Olga was really quite calculable. You could show how much she would change from week to week. It is an oddly cool psychological analysis of "the young person" and something I do not remember seeing as clearly done anywhere outside of Henry James. Much might be written about her, and much more still about a comic masterpiece which does not agitate the mind as some comedies do, but which seems to become grafted on it.

V. S. PRITCHETT

PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST

Double Lives. By WILLIAM PLOMER. *Cape.* 9s. 6d.

Of English writers born in this century none has shown himself more accomplished than Mr. Plomer. He has a remarkable command of language, alike in prose and verse, which has not received all the appreciation it deserves. Look at *The Child of Queen Victoria*. We have been given works more startling, more boldly imaginative, and possibly more promising; but Mr. Plomer here displays an ease, an unassuming certainty, in fiction that I find rivalled in only two of his contemporaries, Mr. Evelyn Waugh and Mr. Isherwood. On the other hand his most recent and most ambitious novel, *The Invaders*, which begins by enthralling, unaccountably collapses. Was this a mischance, such as overtakes the best writers, or is there in Mr. Plomer some radical defect? This is what chiefly I hoped to discover from the book he has just written about his first twenty-five years.

Mr. Plomer was born in 1903. His parents came from what he calls "the stranded gentry": the father was a younger son who got mildly into debt, and was sent to South Africa, where he took part in the Jameson Raid, held a post after the Boer War in the Department of Native Affairs, and after his retirement ran a store for Zulus. The mother was a cultivated woman who bore the rigours of Dominion social life with more courage than indulgence. The young William went first to an excellent school in Johannesburg kept by the Mirfield Fathers; then to a typically nasty prep. school in England run by an Evangelical clergyman, "sour, spiritually wizened and unjust." Already the boy had shocked an aunt by wanting to be not an engine-driver but an artist: "Good Heavens," she exclaimed, "I hope not!" Even worse, he had a natural dislike for cricket; and at this school cricket was, together with the composition of Latin verses and the study of Hebrew mythology, the principal activity. (The loathing with which English writers usually speak of their schools deserves investigation: I have noticed nothing similar in French books.) Then came Rugby during the last war. The headmaster was kind, one of the other masters was stimulating. "I could not understand how such a brilliant and pleasant person as he seemed to be could ever have become a master at a public school, a man so full of curiosity and up-to-date knowledge." Most of us have similarly grateful memories of some exceptional master; and the difficulty of all educational reform is that there must always be a shortage of such men. At Rugby Mr. Plomer took a firm line: "A prefect or somebody would bawl for a fag, all the little boys would scuttle down passages or stairs to answer the call, and the last to arrive would be given a task. This seemed to me so silly that I soon ceased bothering to leave my study." (This wasteful practice still survives I believe, though I have yet to find anyone ingenious enough to defend it.) Increasingly short sight drove the boy from Rugby back to South Africa; and though his parents offered to send him to Oxford, he preferred to work on a farm.

> I see now that Oxford might well have given a valuable intellectual training and discipline; the chance of working out in conversation with people of my own sort many ideas that I have had to grapple with by myself. . . . I see also the advantages I had by not going to Oxford, for I learnt much from early and close contacts with those who may be called ordinary people; and the faculties of my university were those of solitude, remoteness, self-reliance and frugality.

He might, he tells us, as easily have become a painter as a writer; his earliest memory is of the intensity of a visual experience; and it seems to have been the beauty of the South African natives that first excited what became a reasoned contempt for the colour-bar. Evidently nobody with a civilised nature could live in South Africa without being horrified by the treatment of the natives. So Mr. Plomer's first book, *Turbott Wolff*, had as its hero a negrophile who encouraged miscegenation. It is, he tells us, "still kept under lock and key in the public library at Durban, sharing that honour with Rabelais, Boccaccio, *The Origin of Species* and some illustrated books on classical sculpture." Soon after writing it, Mr. Plomer, now aged twenty-two, went to Japan for a fortnight's visit at the invitation of a Japanese sea-captain interested in propaganda for his country. He remained there for three years, earning his bread by teaching.

> I had a happy sense of community with the Japanese; I lived with them and in their fashion and was part of their society; I worked for them and played with them; love and habit made them part of me.

He learned to love half the life of Japan, and to hate the other half: "The love has been an infinite enrichment, the hatred has been justified by events." The final paragraph of his book deserves to be quoted, because in our ignorance we may suppose that everything Japanese is hateful.

> It seems to me that I have been very fortunate to have known and enjoyed, in youth and in time of peace, spells of existence in Africa and Asia, and later to have seen something of immeasurable Russia, of independent Poland, of Germany before Hitler, of Italy before she was brought to ruin by the ridiculous Mussolini, of France before the collapse, and above all Greece. Civilisation has many dialects but speaks one language, and its Japanese voice will always be present to my ear, like the liquid and pure notes of the bamboo flute in those tropical evenings on the Indian Ocean when I heard it for the first time, speaking of things far more important than war, trade and empires—of unworldliness, lucidity and love.

This variety of experience has left Mr. Plomer a determinist. "When, in Japan, one is woken up in the night, as often happens, to feel the house rattled or rocked by an earthquake, one does not shout or even murmur that one is the master of one's fate or the captain of one's soul. An interest in heredity and some perception of its power would in any case have prevented me from believing much in the independence or self-command of the individual." He believes not in progress but in temporary improvement, but his scepticism has not weakened his gusto for life. "We live in a period when work has become a mania and idleness almost a crime, but it is just as well to remember that the best things the human race has done hitherto would have been impossible without leisure and what would now be called idleness." And of the determinist he writes: "If he sees the extraordinary as habitual, he also finds the habitual fascinating." This, I think, is as nice a definition as could be made of the distinctive character of Mr. Plomer's writings. The title of his autobiography makes the same point: having lived among different races, classes and types of person, we are told, "he grew much aware of those contracts between the inward and outward life, between the habitual and the unusual, between the conventional and the true, which go to make up our continually double lives." Such contrasts are the prime material of fiction.

This self-portrait reveals, entirely without complacency or conceit, a man at once antinomian and too adult, too well adjusted, to enjoy rebellion for its own sake. Sensually and intellectually curious, he responds to the beauties of nature and of art. He not only understands but likes human beings. He has the heart to feel, the imagination to perceive, and the detachment to record. In fact he has the ideal equipment of the artist. His autobiography not only is one of the most enjoyable books that have appeared since the war, it also fortifies the belief that its author when released from the war duties to which he refers in his preface, will become an outstanding novelist.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE UNIVERSITIES AND THE FUTURE

Redbrick University. By BRUCE TRUSCOT. *Faber.* 10s. 6d.

A Student's View of the Universities. By BRIAN SIMON. *Longman's, Green.* 5s.

Usually, whatever our social background or education, the first reaction to the word "university" is to think of Oxford and Cambridge. This is one of the reasons, no doubt, why Mr. Truscot has written this admirable book about the provincial universities. "Redbrick" and "Oxbridge," to use his convenient hybrids, are in many respects not merely worlds apart, but different worlds. Some of the newer foundations have achieved great academic success, with schools and departments that possess an international reputation in their specialist spheres, yet a sneaking suspicion remains, sometimes even among their staff and their students, that these are not *real* universities. Any attempt to dispel this impression and to analyse their actual position must begin with definitions; and Mr. Truscot's work is none the less valuable because his definitions as well as his conclusions are sometimes highly controversial.

He has written a chapter on the nature and the aims of a modern university. I do not think it is enough to define a university as "a society which devotes itself to a search after knowledge for the sake of its intrinsic value." Though he elaborates this definition suggestively, he ignores certain problems of purpose and structure that are posed by modern social and economic conditions. You cannot decide what the nature of a university education should be, until you have at least some idea of what it is for, some idea of the aims of the society which it seeks to serve. Yet our philosophy of education, like its counterpart in government, still mainly belongs to that age when our class structure and our social purpose were rarely questioned assumptions.

Very probably, more importance will be attached in the future to the back streets of "Redbrick" than to the "Oxbridge" backs. Meanwhile, we must thank Mr. Truscot for giving us this fine study of the universities outside London and the two traditional centres. The impending changes in our primary and secondary schools will have tremendous repercussions upon the universities, and this book can provide the basis for the discussions that must inevitably precede university reform.

As it is likely that the universities will remain largely under local and independent control, Mr. Truscot wisely recommends that they should co-operate more closely in determining their organisation, academic standards, curricula and finance. On the assumption that in its essential features the existing structure will probably remain unchanged, he has tried to sketch a series of developments which will embody as fully as possible his ideal of a university without departing from the main traditions of higher education in England. Mr. Truscot proposes larger Treasury grants, an increase in residential facilities, an extension of scholarships, the further

development of specialist schools and departments, and a modification of the snobbish attitude adopted by many public and secondary schools towards the provincial universities. He wants to see the complicated methods of government and administration drastically simplified; the nature of degrees, examinations and teaching overhauled, and a greater emphasis placed on universities as centres of research. This review is not the place for detailed discussion, pro and con, of these proposals. That, I hope, is going to take place in many common-rooms, clubs and committee meetings throughout our universities.

Mr. Truscot writes with a fluency and captivating enthusiasm that make this book a delight to read. On one point only I should like to make a sharp criticism. The cover notice says it is "highly sympathetic with the student's point of view." Were I still a student I should be indignant at the lack of balance and patronising tone of the chapter on "Students and Student Life." I realise the difficulties of making the intricacies of the student communities intelligible to those who are not familiar with them. But Mr. Truscot's effort is a hotch-potch which goes nowhere near the heart of the matter. It might be unjust—there are difficulties in bringing a book up to date in these days—to criticise him for almost entirely ignoring the wartime developments in student attitudes and organisations. But I found his picture unreal in many important respects. Perhaps my desire to see more recognition of the part that students can play in the direction and administration of their university prejudices my judgment. But I think the students would be with me in refusing to mistake his sympathy for a real understanding of their position to-day. Everyone will agree with him when he insists that we must understand that the university is a community. Like all communities it has its own traditions and it must seek for its salvation largely within the framework of those traditions. What we need, as it is the main purpose of this book to suggest, is a more balanced, better co-ordinated and more imaginative approach to higher education. It is time that we started to discuss all this, and Mr. Truscot has made a good beginning.

Mr. Simon's book supplies the answer to my criticism of Mr. Truscot's treatment of the student's viewpoint. In fact, it reads like a commentary upon it. Here, in much greater detail, an ex-president of the National Union of Students sets out what are very largely the views of that organisation upon the problems discussed in *Redbrick University*. His analysis is a concrete and valuable aid to clear thinking about them.

Both books are essential reading for the layman who is interested in education, as well as for the students, the staff, and, not least, the governing bodies of our universities.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

COLOURFUL PICTURES?

The Mediterranean. By EMIL LUDWIG. *Hamish Hamilton.* 15*s.*

There is a passage in Lytton Strachey's essay on Gibbon, referring to the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which begins:

> With characteristic good fortune, indeed, the material with which he had to cope was still just not too voluminous to be digested by a single extremely competent mind. In the following century, even a Gibbon would have collapsed under the accumulated mass of knowledge at his disposal. As it was, by dint of a superb constructive vision, a serene self-confidence, a very acute judgment, and an astonishing facility in the manipulation of material, he was able to dominate the known facts.

From a half-sentence in Herr Ludwig's preface—"When I began the modern form of biography in 1919"—it is clear that he shares, with Gibbon, self-confidence. It becomes equally clear, to the reader of his new volume, that he does not share the good fortune, any more than the good sense, that set a limit to Gibbon's ambition. With placid recklessness, Herr Ludwig has attempted to construct, in a book of less than 500 pages, a balanced panorama of the material and cultural development of the Mediterranean from mythological times until 1939. Would it have made much difference if he had chosen the whole world? That he should have failed adequately to digest some 4,000 years of history is less important than the fact that indigestion, in an author, is catching. Someone may say, "Then why read him?" The answer is that it is next to impossible not to persevere with any printed matter, from travel folders upwards, that has the Mediterranean for its theme. That cradle of knowledge and beauty, those beckoning, birthday shores—the problem is how to stop reading about it.

Whisking down the corridors of the past, therefore, in Herr Ludwig's magisterial wake, one realises that something is amiss. But what? The only thing that is sure is that one is going much too fast. "It has always been my effort to transmute grey or even golden into colourful pictures, and the present book is made up almost wholly of these pictures." So does Herr Ludwig express himself in his preface. One has had reason, therefore, to expect pictures, at least, *Aussichtspunkte*. But not at all. There are windows in his corridors, but all one can glimpse, at such a speed, are blurs of light, as if a night express were passing in the opposite direction. What one does receive, on the other hand, are Pronouncements and Revelations. Herr Ludwig has become a seer. We, his readers, arrive on Etna, for example. We have every reason to anticipate something a little out of the ordinary in the way of views, in time and space, but instead we are cursorily informed that: "From the peak of Etna the naked eye can distinguish the coast of Africa; no one who has seen the spectacle can ever during the rest of his life be quite unhappy." And at once Herr Ludwig is thundering ahead towards Sparta, deaf to our cries of "Why?" and "But we haven't seen it." This, the first major disappointment, is on page 38. The next incident we remember, a few pages later, is less thwarting than enigmatic. As he races along, the author snatches a spray of juniper, and calls back over his shoulder: "The needles of the juniper, turned into gin, has driven many a woman mad." We follow, too breathless to reply. We are sometimes allowed to rest, but not for long. Herr Ludwig has dedicated his volume to the columns of the Parthenon, and it is when we are resting, more dead than alive, among their azure shadows, that there occurs one of the most painful interruptions of all. We have just been introduced to Pericles, Herodotus, Sophocles, Euripides, Phidias and Socrates, who have assembled to meet us. Then, a boy comes leaping up the Propylæa "so beautiful with his flying curls that all the grave men turn to look at him." We are about to meet the young Alcibiades. But Herr Ludwig is already leaping down the Propylæa, and so are we. Occasionally the author provides welcome scraps of information. One is interested to be told that it was a German lieutenant of artillery from Lueneberg who aimed and fired the fatal shot at the Parthenon in 1687. But pronouncements crushingly outnumber the news items. What is one to make of these?

> Perhaps the most celebrated school of diplomats came from Venetian territory, because their wits had been sharpened by the whims of the mighty river Po.
>
> Venice is perhaps the only power in the world that never sought to produce heroes.

Again, Herr Ludwig is not very fond of the English, and deals some effective blows, but surely the following is too sweeping?

> Even in those days (1300 A.D.) no Englishman could live without ginger.

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He must have felt that he had exceeded, because a few pages later, ample amends are made. The italics are ours.

The Cretan is not, as has sometimes been asserted, a thief by nature; *no islander is ever a thief by nature.*

For a last quotation, here is something quieter, but thoroughly symptomatic.

The Italians could never lose the Adriatic in war; they might lose it partially in peace after a great defeat.

Herr Ludwig is a talented journalist who should restrict himself to popular biography. His subject should be a black-and-white character, and should not have died too long ago. His life, for example, of the late Kaiser remains his best book. One might go so far as to say that if his more oracular work, like *The Mediterranean*, provided the "colourful pictures" promised, thereby seducing the average reader, and inspiring in him a desire for further knowledge, it would not be wholly unwelcome. But the pictures are not there. And a great deal of fiddlesticks is.

Finally, one's confidence in Herr Ludwig's political judgment is by no means reinforced by the fact that he has published a book about Mussolini in which that repellent desperado is most amiably treated. It would be interesting to know if it has been withdrawn.

BRIAN HOWARD

GERMANY

Great Britain, France and the German Problem, 1918-1939. By W. M. JORDAN. *Oxford Press.* 15s.

The Blockade of Germany after the Armistice, 1918-1919. Selected Documents. Edited by S. L. BANE and R. H. LUTZ. *Oxford Press.* 36s.

Mr. Jordan has written a painstaking and solid book in which he analyses the divergent views prevailing in England and France with regard to the German problem during the inter-war period. He makes it clear that while France was foremost concerned with security, Great Britain endeavoured to "end the paralysis of European trade by promoting the financial and economic recovery of Germany." We are reminded that as a consequence of an all too early demobilisation Great Britain was impotent in European affairs. "Troops could ill be spared for European responsibilities; by the end of 1920 the British Army on the Continent was restricted to 13,000 men on the Rhine." Mr. Jordan writes under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Perhaps this explains why he is approaching his subject less in terms of social dynamics than in the hardly exciting terms of traditional diplomacy whose anonymous wires only gain life when the interpretation is concerned with those who pull them. Whether it is at all possible usefully to discuss Anglo-French relations with Germany by leaving out, as Mr. Jordan does, Soviet-Russia's impact on international affairs during the years 1918–1939, is an open question. If one examines the admirable selection of documents which Miss Bane and Professor Lutz have just given us, one may doubt it. Here is a relevant passage taken from the press comments on the blockade. There we read on p. 720: "We are enforcing the blockade with vigour, we have strong armies ready to advance at the shortest notice. Germany is near starvation. All the evidence I have received from officers sent by the War Office all over Germany shows, first of all, the great privations which the German people are suffering; and secondly, the danger of a collapse of the entire structure of German social and national life under the pressure of hunger and malnutrition. Now therefore is the moment to settle. To delay indefinitely would be to run a grave risk of having nobody with whom to settle, and of having another great area of the world sink into Bolshevist anarchy . . ." The author of these sentences is Mr. Winston Churchill, then Secretary for War and Air.

This volume (Publication No. 16 of The Hoover Library on War, Revolution, and Peace) is full of weighty material and ought to be available in every good library.

In our list of "Books You Can Get," published on October 16th, Prof. Stebbing's *Ideals and Illusions* was attributed to Secker & Warburg. The name of the publisher should have been given as Watts, and we regret this error.

Week-end Competitions

No. 717

Set by G. W. Stonier

New Societies continue to spring up, even in wartime, and competitors are asked to add to them. An indication of the purpose, scope and rules of the projected Society should be given in not more than 200 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, November 8th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 714

Set by Tom Paine

The usual prizes are offered for the most interesting replies, in not more than 200 words, to the question: "What book has had most influence on your life?"

Report by Tom Paine

It was, I think, rather to the older generation of readers that this invitation to examine their past lives appealed. Most of the 200 or so entrants took the invitation very seriously. The variety of books that have influenced people is staggering. I rule out first some excellent jesters. The man, for instance, who declared that his life had been changed by a dictionary that fell on his head and dinted his skull, and the competitor who had Henry James's *Awkward Age* thrown at him by his adolescent sister. Nor can I accept pay-books or cheque books or pass books, or Bradshaws, or telephone directories as eligible for prizes. One man declared that he had been so impressed by *The Light that Failed* that he had abandoned his aspiration to be a painter until he was near fifty, only then to find that in three years he could succeed quite well without becoming blind. Several plumped for Mrs. Beeton, the best of these was stated in excellent verse by an Oxford clergyman. Allan Laing disqualified himself by explaining that "No single book in all my time has influenced me worth a dime." Here is the best of the jests:

The book that has had most influence on my life was *The Way of an Eagle*, by the muchly beloved Ethel M. Dell. It taught me to avoid one-armed men who strangle tigers with their bare hands and involve women in a great deal of discomfort. I have therefore been able to live a quiet monotonous life with a two-handed seller of old books.

I liked, too, this short entry from an exile from Hitler's Germany:

The book which has had most influence on my life is one which I never read: *Mein Kampf.*

A number of entrants wrote sincerely about the formative influence of the Bible on their lives. Maurice Cranston, by way of a change, explained that he reacted from Puritan teaching about the Bible when he discovered that it contained both smut and sex, and that the pious lies told him to cover these embarrassments helped to make him a sceptic. His entry was perhaps the most interesting example of a category of entrants best defined in the words of another competitor who quoted "Pins have saved thousands of lives by their not swallowing them."

Other books and authors chosen include *The Book of Common Prayer*, Trine's *In Tune with the Infinite*, various works of Ruskin, Sterne, Proust, *The Mighty Atom*, various anthologies of prose and verse, which

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roused the entrants to the joys of reading *The Origin of Species*, Dostoievsky, Tolstoy, Kingsley's *Heroes*, Browning, *Eothen*, Shaw's *Prefaces*, Pendlebury's *Arithmetic*, *Bath Comedy* by Agnes and Egerton Castle, Blatchford's *Not Guilty*, Rider Haggard, Lewis Carroll, Samuel Smiles, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Jack London, Joanna Field, *Les Misérables*, La Rochefoucauld, Homer, Dunne's *Experiment with Time*, Beverley Nichols, Douglas Reed, Noel Coward, *Robinson Crusoe*, The Lives of Missionaries, *Tarzan*, Euclid, Chesterton and Belloc, *Old Wives' Tale*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. A schoolmaster described how he roused the interest of an inattentive class by reading aloud from H. G. Wells, with the odd result that one of the scholars fell in love with him and he was dismissed because of their subsequent intimate but innocent correspondence. Another entrant was so influenced by *Jane Eyre* that she left off going to beauty parlours and became a serious person. A dyspeptic claimed to have been made healthy by reading *Food*, a Penguin by Frank Wokes, while *The Young Visiters* changed a career by inspiring a child with the ambition to write. Reading *Fanny Hurst* saved a young woman from going wrong. Books of purely intellectual appeal which influenced the minds of competitors include W. E. Johnson's *Logic*, Bertrand Russell, the Federalist, Herbert Spencer and Havelock Ellis. I was surprised that Shaw and Wells and Russell did not appear more often.

Interesting entries were also written about Rilke, *Vikran and Vampire* (a book of Hindu devilry), *Joan le Bleu*, Samuel Smiles, and *The Way of All Women*, by Esther Harding. Two entrants, one a chemist and one an engineer, described how their lives had been changed by the accidental discovery that scientific textbooks were the most interesting things in life.

A remarkable testimony to one of my favourite books, *Moby Dick*, nearly won the prize. Other close runners-up described the permanent value of studying Arnold's *Latin Prose*, Bertrand Russell's *Scientific Outlook*, Carlyle's French Revolution (an excellent and convincing entry from Archibald Robertson). R. K.'s life was changed by *That Dreadful School*, by A. S. Neill. She became a rationalist and later sent her son to Summerhill.

After much hesitation I recommend that the prizes be divided between Glyn Bevan, Abderrahman and Senex—three entries convincing in their sincerity. I turn a blind eye to Abderrahman overrunning the word-limit a little, but F.C.C., whose entry is too good not to print, has been too wanton to obtain a prize.

The Grapes of Wrath, by John Steinbeck, has influenced and impressed me most as this book has given me an entirely new outlook on life.

I read it in 1939, when despair had almost won my soul—when the world was swaying and tottering into chaos. I was almost an adult, after an upbringing by a Welsh ex-miner caught in the toils of the Dole and the Means Test, and could see no way out of the grimness and poverty which flooded my life.

Then I read of the Oklahoma family which journeyed 2,000 miles to California, the land of their dreams, and of the colossal difficulties which beset them. Starvation and death shadowed them, but fatalism and fear did not seize their hearts, and hope reigned even when earth's terrors began to overwhelm them.

I read of the calmness of Ma Joad, who strove to steer her family from disaster, and learned that humour was necessary, though one's private world tumbled about one's ears.

This book has led me from inert pessimism to constructive optimism. It has taught me to think, in Ma Joad's plain words of wisdom, "It ain't kin we. It's will we."

GLYN BEVAN

For the last twenty-five years, ever since as a little under-nourished boy I stole a copy from the school library, I have been completely under the spell of *Lavengro*. I shut my eyes and roamed the hidden places of the earth, conversed with strange peoples under hedgerows (in their own tongue), baffling them with my knowledge of their secrets—in fact, had you started me off anywhere in the book I could have finished it for you by heart. Then, presumably, I grew up, but I have known no rest—thanks to Borrow. After a few tentative trips in Europe I wandered into the most outlandish places, giving up home and job to do so. I have slept in mud huts in the Riff and Atlas Mountains, have hobnobbed with Spanish gypsies, Bedouins in the Syrian Desert and pearl divers in the Persian Gulf. Modern scholarship may assail the intolerance of the lordly one, his egotism and pomposity, question the veracity of his chronicle and deride his crude philology, but for me the romance of *Lavengro* is still untarnished. I am still enthralled. I am only waiting for this war to finish to do something daft again.

ABDERRAHMAN

Philip Vivian's *The Church's Modern Thought* is not a literary masterpiece, probably not a great book at all. It has, however, the merit of being so clearly written, so tolerant and undogmatic, and is such a devastating refutation of the dogmas and claims of theologians, that I cannot see how any honest person reading it can go on holding what is called "the Faith once delivered to the Saints."

This book came my way at a time when I was doubting if it were possible for me to remain a priest in the Church of England.

It settled the question for me, and gave me the final kick out of the straitened security of a country living into the free and open but very chilly atmosphere of a world in which I found at first I was neither fish, flesh nor good red herring. My life was changed utterly.

A wife and five young children had to be provided for with an income the same as that of an agricultural labourer at the present day.

We have stuck it for thirty years.

Now, at 77, I can truly say I would not change places with any man, young, middle-aged or old.

My wife would say she is as happy as I am.

My children are all doing well in well-placed jobs.

SENEX

When I was a child the *Blue Fairy Book*, edited by Andrew Lang, fed my imagination as no other book has done before or since. A puzzled son of Charles Darwin's once said, after being shown round a friend's new house: "But where does he do his earth-worms?" and in realistic stories about the lives of other children there was always some trouble of this sort. But Fairy Stories were true and satisfying from beginning to end. Nothing in verse had for me such a quality of pure poetry as their forests and their dragons. The only stories not wholly satisfactory were those translated from eighteenth-century French. I see now that they had been drained of their primitive mythical content, which was what I most needed. If I had not been deprived of all the great religious myths, or the highest agnostic principles, perhaps I should not have been quite so starved. But always Fairy Stories would have been a necessity. When I remember that Madame Montessori wishes to deprive children of Fairy Tales I want to condemn her to the lowest circle of the Inferno.

"They cause neuroses and they prevent us from adapting ourselves to reality," indeed! What a miserable sort of reality that we can gain by buttoning sham buttons on a card, and lose by absorbing into our beings, say, *Beauty and the Beast*. And as for neuroses, if I die in an asylum on account of a hopeless early addiction to the Blue Fairy Book (and the Red and the Green) I can only tell you, Madame M., that it will have been well worth while.

F. C. C.

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